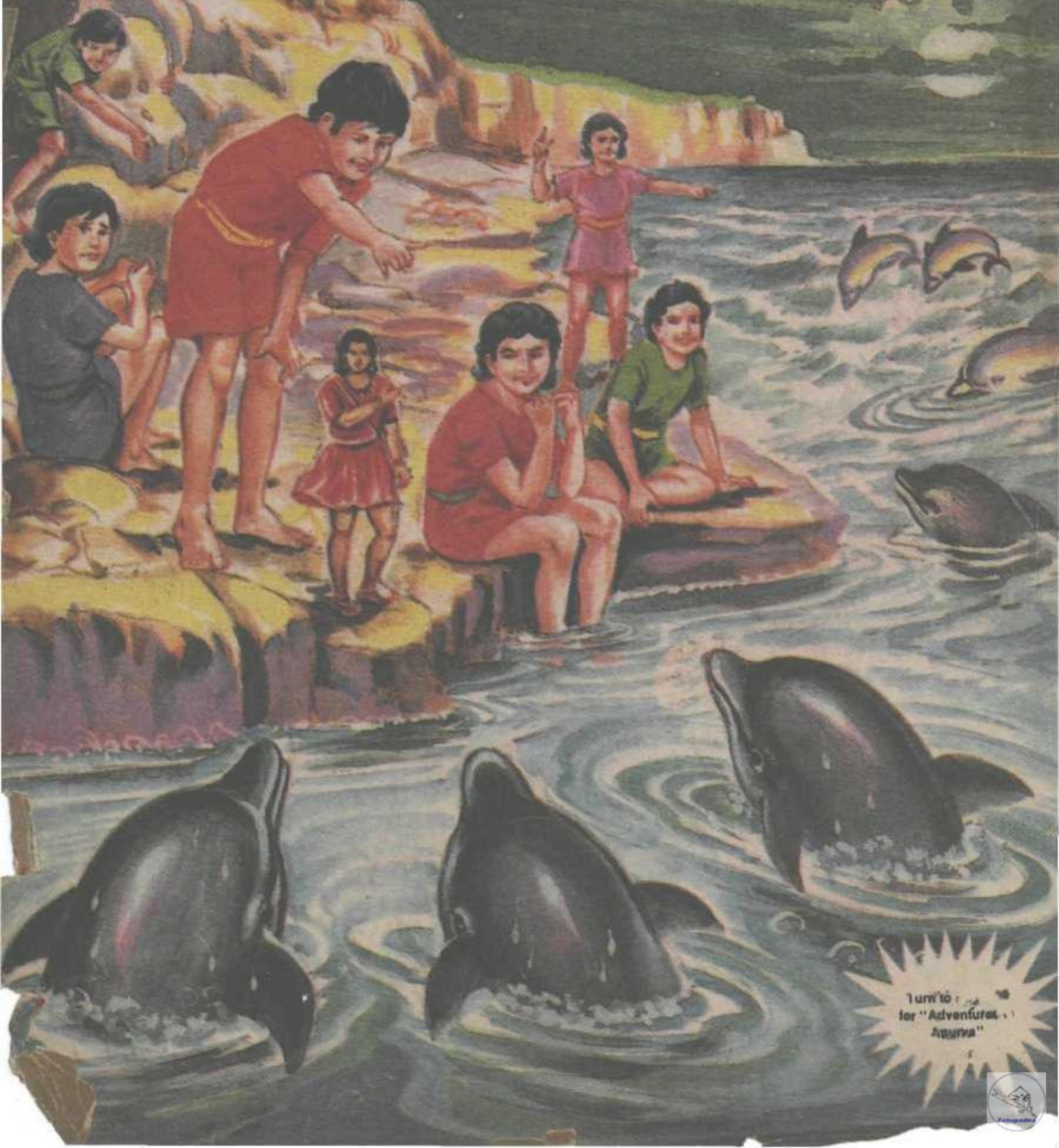


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You've been waiting,
haven't you? The Secret
Seekers are back with
this new mystery.

This time the BSA
SLR Secret Seekers are
on a holiday on the
Island of Gods. One
night a loud commo-
tion on the beach leads
them to a room full of
idols. Who brought
them? Lurking close is
an idol thief...

they heard
the tune
of the fisher-
man's song.
"That's a
heavy catch."
Pooja's face
fell. Not smugglers
after all. Then Pooja's BSA's
wheel went over something hard.

"Look, Lal uncle's walking
stick," pointed Ralph. "But how



The Mystery of the

I

t was well past 10.30 pm, and
Pooja couldn't sleep. The past two
nights she had seen flashlights at sea.
Smugglers? But the others didn't
believe her. 11.05 pm... There it was!
"Vipul, Ralph, get up," and she shook
them awake.

S POTTING THE THIEF

They headed for the beach on their
BSA SLRs. But for the firm grip of their
BSA's wheels they'd have skidded on
the sands. Drawing close,



BSA SLR

Get Set'n'Go on an adventure



was it here?"

A little perplexed, but alert they rode quickly on their BSAs to check if he was home. He wasn't. Just then the gate creaked open and Lal uncle walked in, unaided and barefoot. "That's

ISLAND

unusual," said Pooja, puzzled. They had never seen him without a walking stick...

THE IDOLS, THE IDOLS

... As the door to his room shut, they headed in the direction he had come. Ralph peered through his binoculars. Balancing his BSA was easy since it was light. "Hey, there's a shack ahead," and Pooja peeped in, "Wow, there's a fortune here. Stolen idols of Gods in all sizes that the papers had written about."

Just then they spotted the glimmer

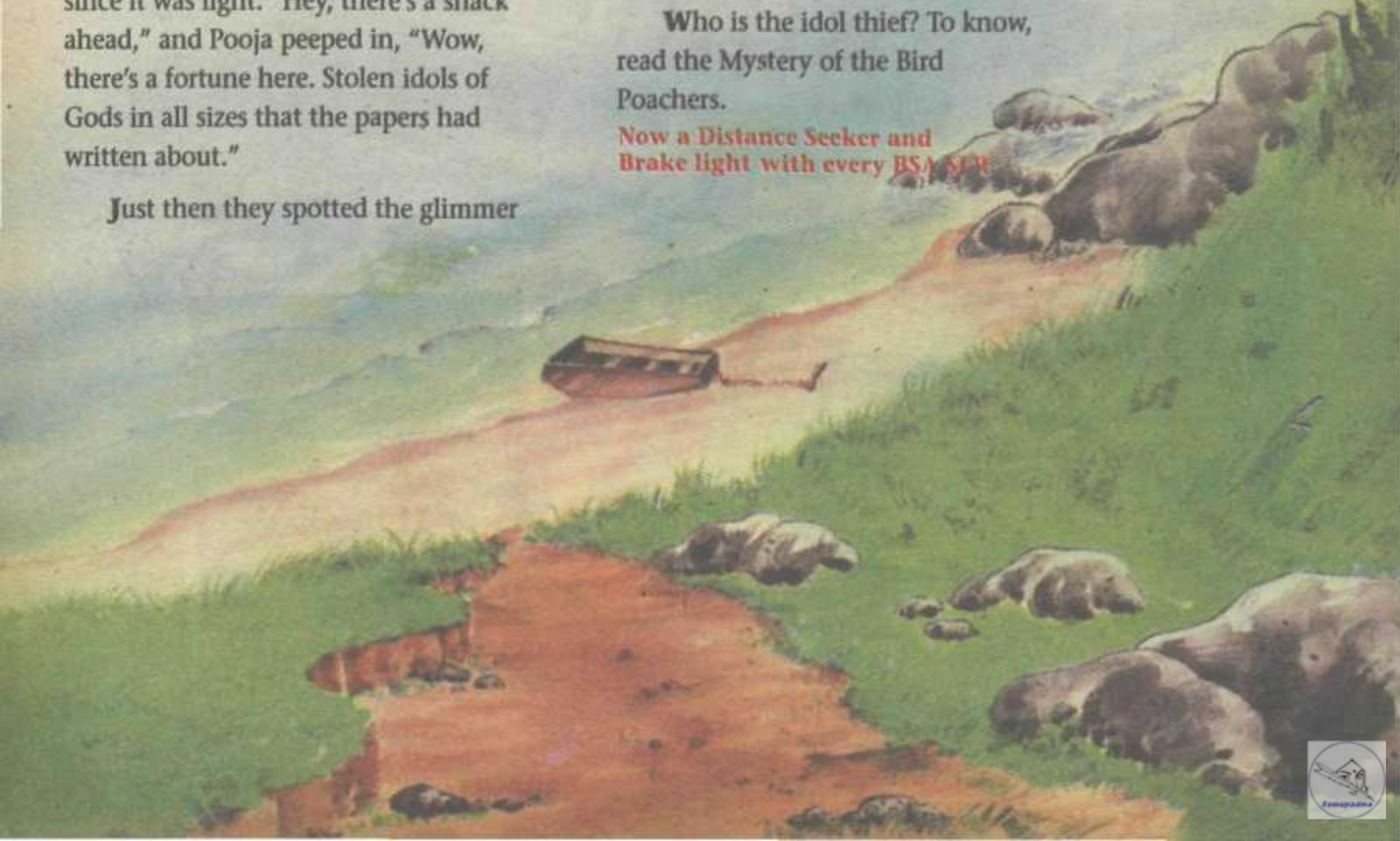


of GODS

of a torchlight. The light was moving towards the shack. "Quick, get on your BSA SLRs, hide behind the rocks."

Who is the idol thief? To know, read the Mystery of the Bird Poachers.

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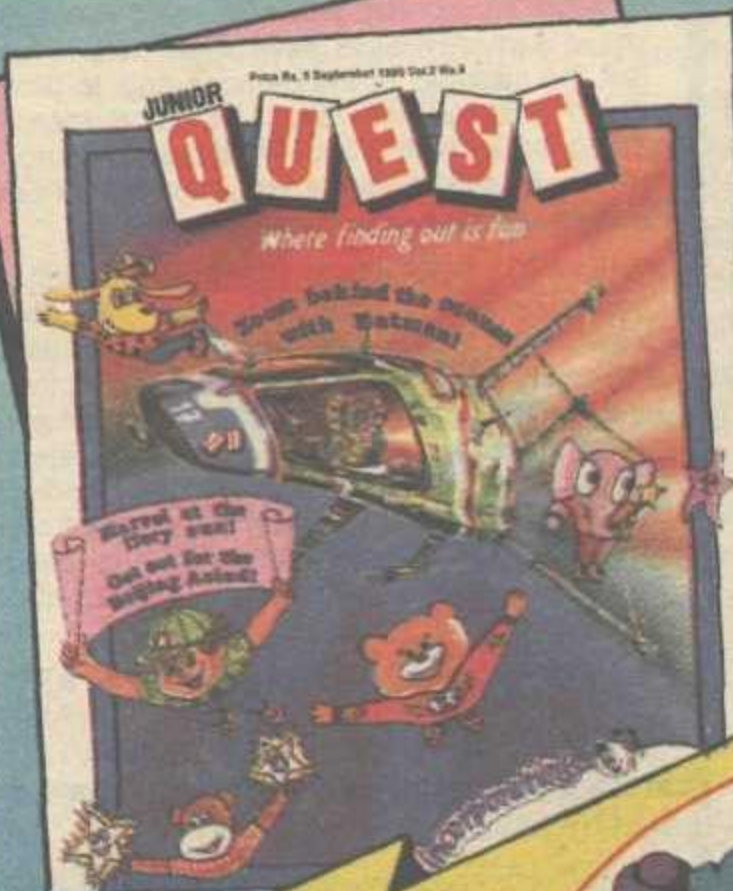
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9



CHANDAMAMA

IN THIS ISSUE

Vol. 22 OCTOBER 1991 No. 4

Stories :

Adventures Of Apurva-8	... Page 19
Thieving A Thief	... Page 26
Fake or Genuine?	... Page 30
The Missing Statue	... Page 37
Veer Hanuman-13	... Page 45
Borrowed Charity	... Page 53
Culprit	... Page 59
Man To Man-Eater	... Page 60

Picture Stories :

Panchatantra-10	... Page 14
God's Instrument	... Page 44

Features :

Towards Global Peace	... Page 12
Supplement-36	... Page 33
World Of Sport	... Page 52
World Of Nature	... Page 58

**And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!**

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 22 NOVEMBER 1991 No. 5

AN INCIDENT RECALLED : Hanuman reveals himself to Sita and speaks in reverence of Rama. He undertakes to carry Sita's message to Rama, and wants a proof of his meeting with her. Sita narrates an incident which she and Rama alone know. Hanuman takes leave of her. He is itching to test the strength of the demons and, to provoke them, destroys the lovely Asoka garden. The demonesses rush to alert Ravana and request him to capture the strange creature before he can do more havoc to Lanka.

THE WHITE ELEPHANT : The king wants one of his grey elephants turned into white. The popular washerman is called; he has a score to settle with the potter who refuses to pay for the clothes he washed. The potter is ordered to make a huge pot, which however breaks the moment the elephant steps into it. The king calls for a larger, sturdier pot. That, too, breaks. The potter runs away from the kingdom. The washerman takes the elephant home and returns a white elephant. But is it really white? An exciting tale from Burma.

PLUS all the regular features including ADVENTURES OF APURVA and PANCHATANTRA, besides CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT.

Printed by B.V. REDDI at Prasad Process Private Ltd, 188 N.S.K. Salai, Madras 600 026 (India) and published by B. VISWANATHA REDDI on behalf of CHANDAMAMA PUBLICATIONS, Chandamama Buildings, Vadapalani, Madras 600 026 (India). The stories, articles and designs contained herein are the exclusive property of the publishers and copying or adapting them in any manner will be dealt with according to law.



Controlling Editor:
NAGI REDDI



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IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

Come October, and one hears of and witnesses a lot of activity in the name of Gandhiji, as the nation remembers him on his birth anniversary. A word synonymous with the Mahatma is SATYAGRAHA.

Before he returned to India in the first decades of the 20th century, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, then a practising barrister in South Africa, was leading the struggle by the Indian community against the oppressive racial regime in that country. He described it as 'passive resistance'.

Soon after his arrival in India, he took over the leadership of the people's fight for the country's freedom from foreign rule. He called it 'Satyagraha', which took the form of non-cooperation with the government.

The word literally means the search (*agraha*-desire) for truth (*satya*), and indicates an individual effort and a solemn activity in which there is no place for violence or coercion. Gandhiji gave it a deeper meaning, calling it 'soul-force' which, in simpler terms, means one's will. He proved that nothing is impossible to achieve if one were to use this power, which one has to sharpen himself.

Unfortunately, since Independence, people have been resorting to Satyagraha even using violent methods. Thereby, they have not been fair to the Mahatma. If one were to search for the truth behind any problem, its solution should not be beyond one's reach.



TOWARDS GLOBAL PEACE



The two superpowers—the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.—who have a formidable array of nuclear warheads, have agreed to reduce their stockpile. Their signing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) on July 31 has been hailed as an epochal event which takes the world away from the risk of another global war by a few steps.

It was not the first time President Bush and President Gorbachev were meeting each other.



But their first ever Summit in Moscow on the two closing days of July heralded the end of a half-century of mistrust between the two powers when both of them got busy building up arsenals capable of causing heavy damage to each other.

After several nations of the world began expressing their anxiety over the continued piling up of nuclear warheads by the superpowers and the United Nations every now and then cried halt to such stockpiling, the two

began talks in 1982 suggesting a 50 per cent cut in their nuclear arsenals.

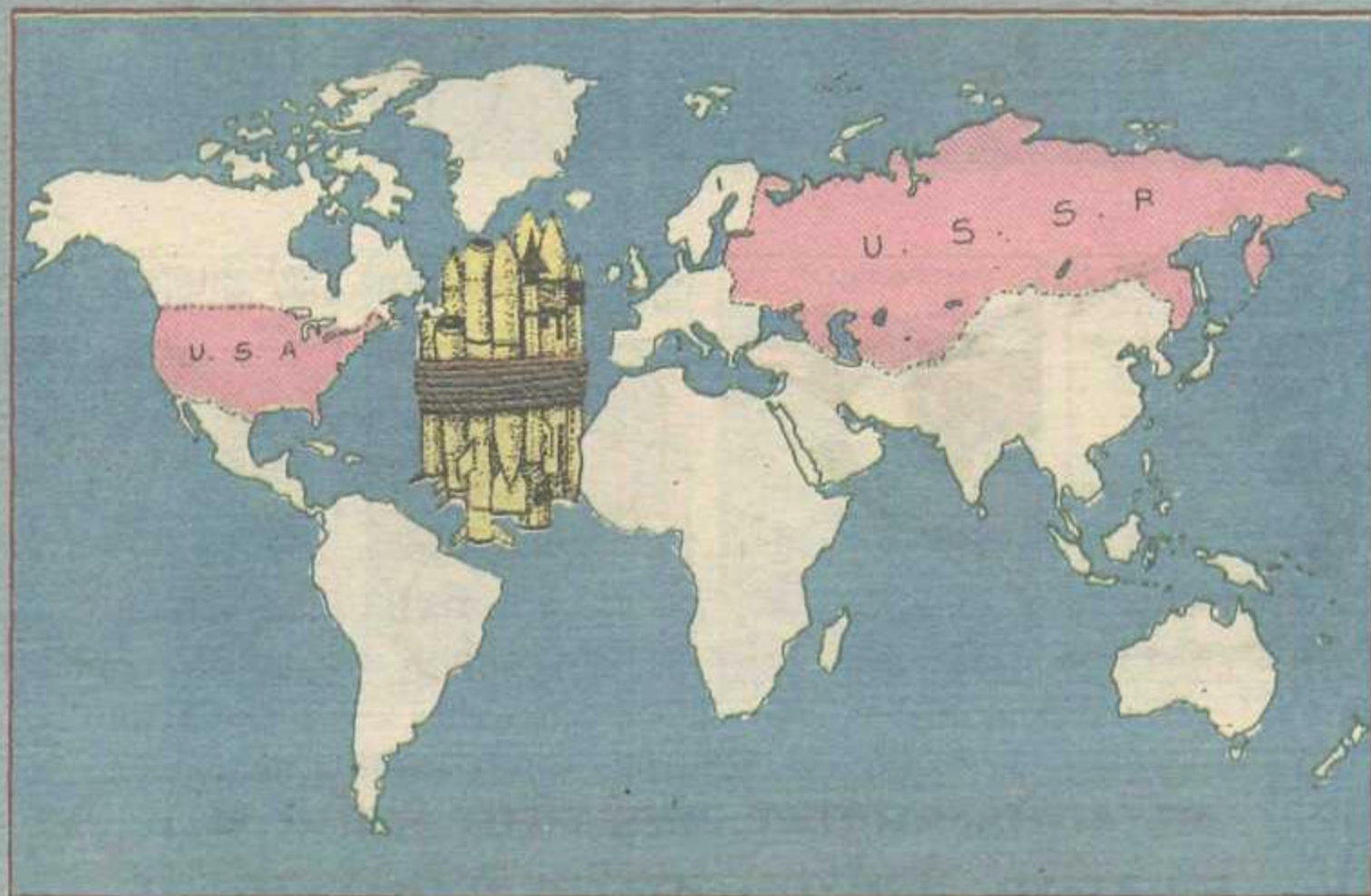
Nine years of deliberations later, the START Treaty has agreed to a 30 per cent reduction of their nuclear weapons. In effect, however, this will mean a 35 per cent cut for the Soviet Union and 28 per cent for the U.S.A., bringing the number of strategic warheads down to 7,000 and 9,000 respectively.

If we go by what Defence experts opine, a stockpile of just 400 warheads with any one of the

two powers is enough to inflict disastrous damage to the other. One saving feature of the Treaty is, it limits the strategic nuclear delivery vehicles to 1,600 each. Like, one having enough stones but no catapult!

The START Treaty, we are told, will be valid for 15 years and can be renewed once in five years after that period. It provides for a joint commission for purposes of verification and inspection, too.

Shall we hope that the world has moved two steps nearer to global peace?



COME WHAT MAY, THE ELEPHANT SHOULD BE PUNISHED!



DON'T WORRY, WE'LL DESTROY THE ELEPHANT—THIS IS MY PLAN.



AFTER SOME TIME!

NOW, MR. GNAT, GO AND DO AS I'VE SAID.



THE GNAT HOVERS AROUND THE ELEPHANT'S HEAD SINGING....



3400M! 3400M!

HOW SWEET THE MUSIC IS! I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING LIKE THIS.



HA! THE ELEPHANT IS ENCHANTED BY THE GNAT'S MUSIC.



NOW IT IS YOUR TURN. GO AND PECK AT HIS EYES.



HERE I GO!



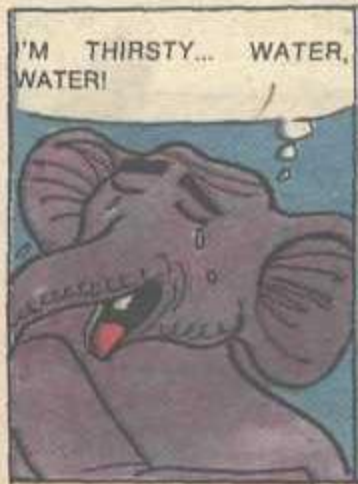
HO! MY EYES! I CAN'T SEE! I'M BLIND! HO!



NOW I SHALL STAND AT THE EDGE OF THAT PIT AND CROAK!



आरभन्तेऽल्पमेवाज्ञाः कामं व्यग्रा भवन्ति च ।
महाराम्भाः कृतधियस्तिष्ठन्ति च निराकुलाः ॥



The weak-minded gets upset even at the beginning of a small enterprise. But the courageous remain calm even when undertaking to perform a great task.

ONLY GARUDA, THE KING OF BIRDS, CAN HELP US.

LET'S ALL GO AND PRAY TO HIM!



BEFORE GARUDA.

OH, MIGHTY ONE! PRAY, HELP US! THE WICKED OCEAN HAS SWALLOWED OUR CHICKS.

HOW CRUEL OF HIM! HE'LL PAY FOR THIS!



AFTER PROMISING TO HELP THE TITTIBHAS, GARUDA STOPS GOING TO HIS MASTER, LORD VISHNU. HE IS PERPLEXED OVER HIS ABSENCE. SO, HE HIMSELF COMES TO THE ABODE OF GARUDA.

OH! MY LORD! I'M BLESSED BY THY VISIT! I'M EVER THY HUMBLE SERVANT



WHAT'S THE REASON FOR YOUR LONG ABSENCE?



MY KINSMEN ARE IN GREAT GRIEF. THEIR EGGS HAVE BEEN SWALLOWED BY THE OCEAN!

IS IT SO? HE SHALL RETURN THE EGGS TO THE POOR BIRDS!



VISHNU FLIES TO THE OCEAN, FOLLOWED BY GARUDA AND THE BIRDS.

YOU INSOLENT OCEAN! RETURN THE EGGS OR I SHALL DRY YOU UP WITH THIS AGNEYASTRA.



OH LORD! FORGIVE ME. I SHALL OBEY THY COMMAND!

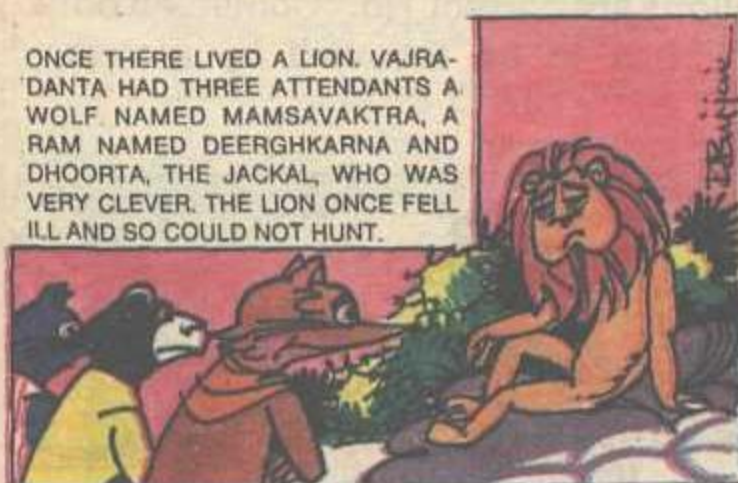


DAMANAKA CONCLUDES THE STORY THERE.

THEREFORE, HE WHO FIGHTS WITHOUT KNOWING THE ENEMY'S STRENGTH LOSES THE BATTLE.



अर्थनाशं मनस्तापं गृहे दुश्चरितानि च ।
वञ्चनं चापमानं च मतिमान् न प्रकाशयेत् ॥



A man with a sound sense does not go about speaking of his financial loss, of his agony, of scandal in his family, of his being deceived or of his humiliation.

TOWARDS BETTER ENGLISH

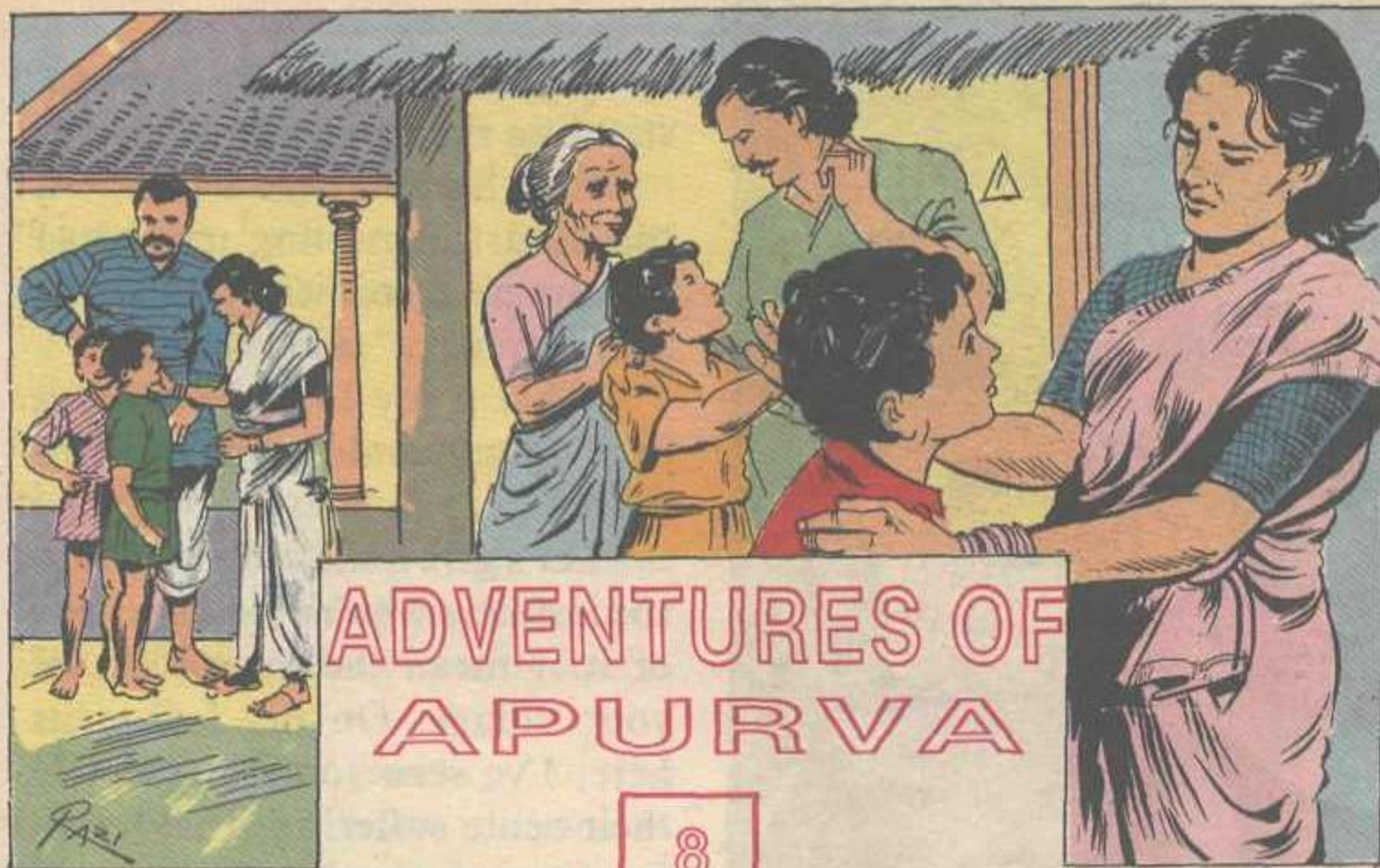
AN UNWELCOME PERSON

Atom Kirankumate Singh of Manipur read in newspapers that a certain country had asked some officials of the embassy of another country to leave within 24 hours, accusing them of spying. The officials were declared *persona non grata*. Atom did not understand this expression. Naturally. This is Latin, and not English, but very commonly used. It is the opposite of *persona grata*, which as an adjective means personally acceptable or welcome, or as a noun, a person who is acceptable or favoured, one everybody likes to, shall we say, *greet*!

The TV News was on, and the reader referred to a *suo moto* statement made by the Home Minister in the Parliament about an incident that had taken place in Punjab. K. L. Mirchandani of Baroda, who was listening to the news, wondered what kind of statement that would be. If he had been sitting in the visitor's gallery in the Parliament, he would have seen the Minister getting up from his seat and making the statement, and *not answering a question* asked by a member. The Minister was stating certain facts on his own (*suo*) initiative (*motu*—note spelling), and not prompted or motivated by somebody. *Suo motu* is also a Latin expression.

Chhoto Gawai of Nagpur seems to be confused. When newspapers and magazines "jump" from one page to another to print the continuation matter of a report or an article, they normally carry the direction to the reader to turn to the later page, by using the expression "continued on" or "continued to". He is not sure whether both the prepositions are correct. No. "Continued on" is absolutely correct. "Continued to" has to be followed by a verb. Magazines also use "turn to"





(Apurva—the doll-like miracle boy who emerged from a yajna performed by a Himalayan Rishi—is active in saving so many people from death and danger. With Samir's help, he rescues seven boys from a pirate ship.)

If there was great anguish and anxiety among the parents and friends of the five boys who had been lost, there was great rejoicing with their return. The happiness was not confined to the families of the boys. It became widespread because the notorious gang of pirates was captured. The king rewarded the five boys and honoured Samir. All

the citizens congratulated them. Samir became a hero.

But Samir felt terribly embarrassed about it. He alone knew what nobody else knew—that he had been a mere instrument in the hands of Apurva. But it was beyond his capacity to persuade Apurva to come to the limelight. Poor Samir had to receive all the accolades.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE



After the pirates were put to trial and thrown into jail and all the hullabaloo had subsided, Samir retired into a place of solitude not far from his house. Apurva had assured him that whenever he called him in silence, with concentration, he would respond. Is it true? Could he really meet Apurva at his own will? He sat down on a stone near a brook in order to meditate on Apurva.

"But I'm already here—looking for an opportunity to talk to you!"

The melodious voice surprised and thrilled Samir. Indeed, who

else should it be but Apurva, standing right in front of him?

"Yes, Samir, before you felt the need for meeting me, I had felt the need to meet you, that's why I'm here," said Apurva.

"What a joy for me! What a joy!" Samir could not say a word more.

"Let's give a share of our joy to some others who're really in need of it. I mean the poor folks of your village. On my few visits here, I've seen some of them in their acute suffering. They've no food to eat; they've no means to call a doctor or buy medicines whenever they fall ill. Can't you do something for them?"

"I? What can I do, O my good angel, though I would love to see their suffering removed! They're poor; they need money. And I've no money," said Samir with a heavy sigh.

"You'll have money, but don't address me as angel. Call me Apurva. If you don't I'll stop talking to you."

"I'll obey you, Apurva, but how can I get money?"

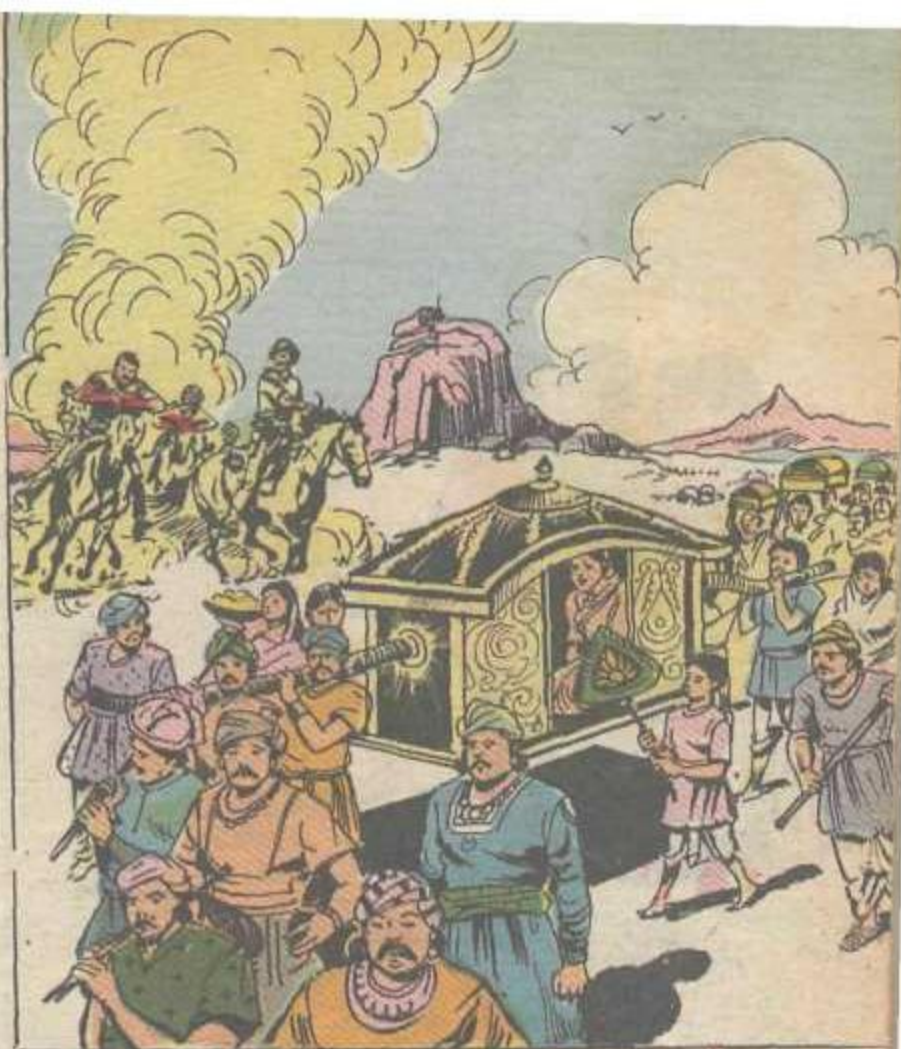
Apurva revealed to him how, while hiding in the ship, he had overheard some of the pirates talking among themselves

about an islet formed by a few rocks where lay a huge quantity of gold and jewellery. It seems some ten years ago they had plundered a ship carrying a newly wed princess to her husband's house..."

Samir clapped his hands with excitement and cut in, "We all have heard about that. It was such a sensational event that our elders are never tired of recounting it."

"Right. The jewellery of the princess are all stored in a cave in that island, along with precious gems and gold taken away from many others. But as the pirates soon broke into two gangs, with each gang claiming its right to the booty, there were frequent clashes between them and nobody could touch the treasure. However, the gang which has now been captured had managed to finish off the other gang in a recent clash. Only a few of their enemies escaped. The gang would have proceeded to the islet to find the booty soon after plundering the merchant ship. But as luck would have it, they landed in jail!" said Apurva, smiling.

"Excellent. So, the hidden



treasure remains safe for us to claim it!" observed Samir.

"Right. But it may not lie safe for long! When the few surviving members of the rival gang come to know that the main gang has been captured, they'll hurry to lay their hands on the treasure!" said Apurva.

"But how do we locate the islet?" Samir asked pensively.

"I think, the dolphin which became friendly towards me knows about it. That was a very unique dolphin. Whatever I wished it to do, it did it, feeling the vibrations of my thought. Tomorrow is a full moon night.





Shall we go and explore the sea for the rock-islet?"

Samir was excited at the proposal. "Can't we take those five friends with us? You can't imagine how eager they're to meet you. To enjoy some adventure with you will be a most memorable experience for them," said Samir.

Apurva thought for a moment and then consented to the proposal.

It was not difficult for Samir to collect the boys or to obtain permission from their parents to let them accompany him on an excursion. The parents had by

now grown a great trust in Samir. It was because of Samir that their boys were not only saved and escaped slavery but became famous. The boys would be safe with Samir, they were sure.

Needless to say the boys themselves were overjoyed. Their meeting with Apurva was the most blissful moment in their life.

It was a bright full moon night. Standing on the deserted seashore, Apurva shut his eyes and concentrated on the dolphins. Beyond the waves where the water was calm, some splashes were heard and also seen. "They've come!" exclaimed Apurva. He proved correct. The joyous dolphins raised their heads and made some sounds as if to convey their readiness to do whatever was expected of them.

The dolphin familiar with Apurva was no doubt the leader of the group. Apurva, Samir, and the five boys rode a dolphin each. A dozen other dolphins escorted them.

Apurva's dolphin led the expedition. Surely it had understood where Apurva wished to go. Speedy was the voyage. The sea was calm and the wind tender. Some seagulls circled over their

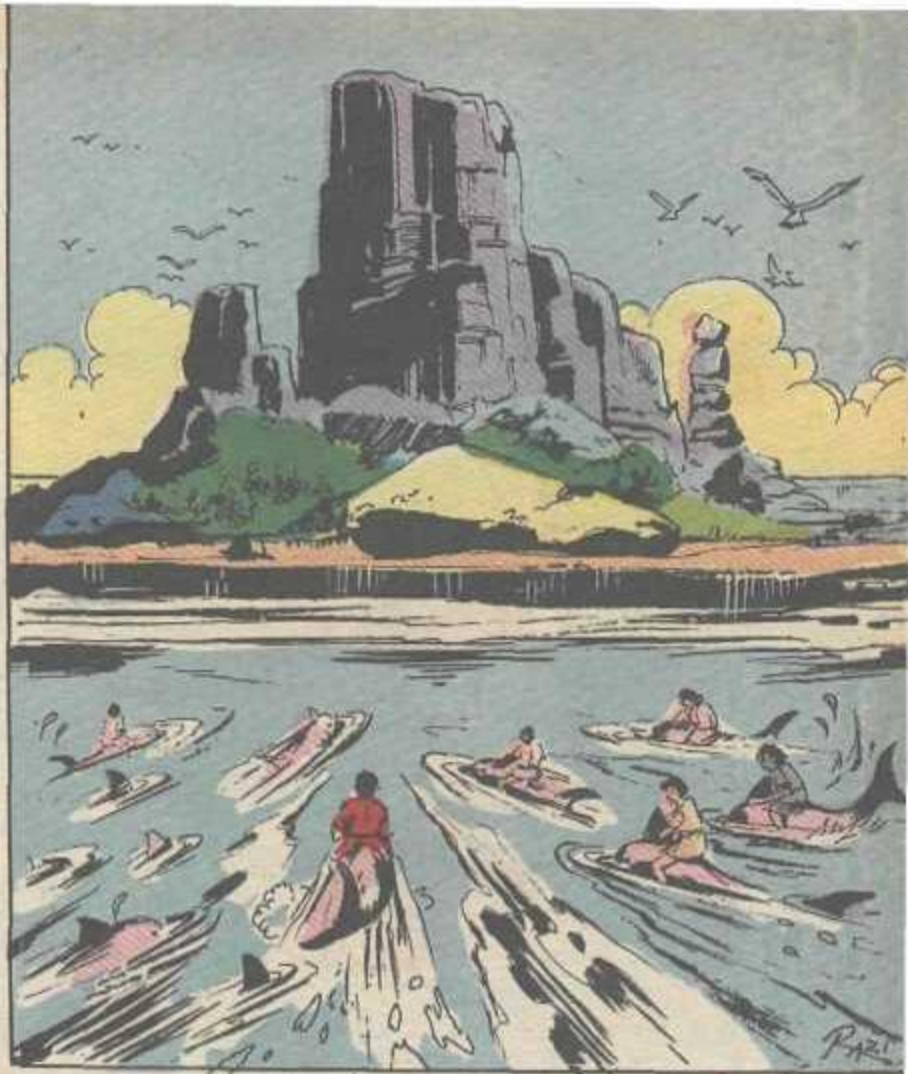
head and seemed to synchronise their flight with the progress made by the dolphins.

They had started with the moonrise. When the moon was on the meridian, they saw, standing like an assembly of giants, a cluster of rocks. Soon their contours became prominent. The dolphins touched one of them and stopped.

Apurva and his six companions climbed the rocks, but there were a number of rocks with numerous caves on them. Where would the hidden treasure be? It was not going to be easy to locate it. It might take many days or even weeks!

Desperately they peeped into the very first cave they saw. Something dazzled inside. Was it a precious stone—a diamond? The passage into the cave was slippery and mossy. Even then Samir tried to crawl into it. But he retreated suddenly, fear writ large on his face. Behind him were a few serpents—perhaps cobras—which disappeared into the crevices and holes outside the cave.

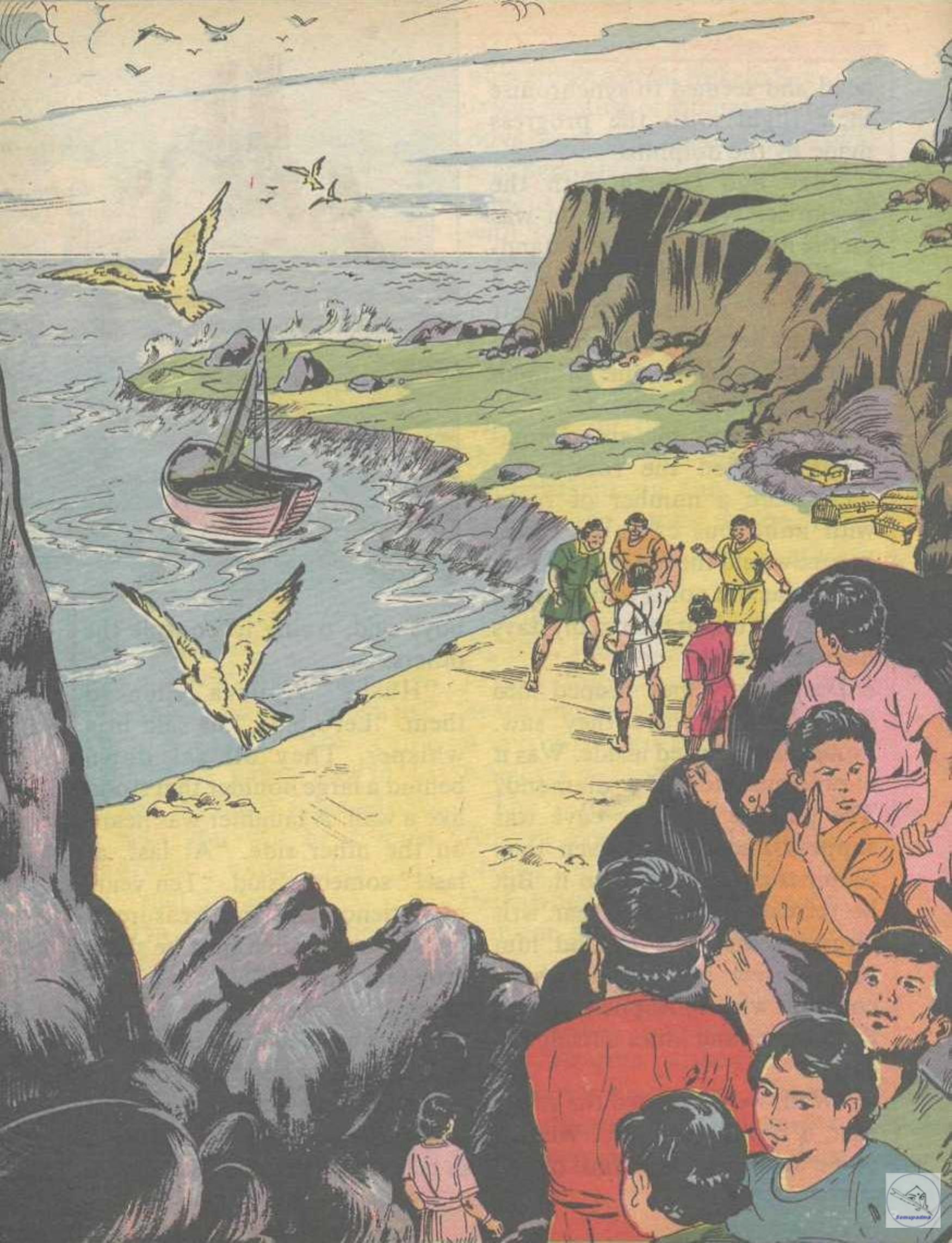
“Well, we’ve located the rock-islet, if not the treasure. We can come another time,” one of the



boys said, trying to console the others.

“Hush!” Apurva silenced them. “Let’s hide,” he said in a whisper. They all sat down behind a large boulder that stood like a wall. A laughter was heard on the other side. “At last, at last!” someone said. “Ten years of patience and the treasure is ours! Our enemies must be shedding tears in hell!” It was a lusty voice.

“Do you believe we’ll go to heaven when we die? And, to remind you, all our enemies are not in hell, you know, some of them are in jail!” said someone else.





“Don’t delay. Let’s carry the treasure to our boat,” said another voice.

“But I’m hungry and thirsty, too. Let’s eat and drink!” said the second one.

“No! First thing first. Let’s carry the treasure to the boat. Then we can eat and drink to our heart’s content,” commanded the first one with some authority.

Apurva peeped and saw that there were five able-bodied men. They kept themselves busy in removing the boxes to their boat. The boxes lay in a cave half of which was underground. It would have been very difficult for anyone who did not know its location, to find it.

It took them more than an hour to finish their work. “Come on. Let’s eat!” said the fellow who behaved like their leader.

Two of them brought the food

and drink from the boat. They sat down and ate and drank, and sang and shouted. Their shrieks and yells grew louder. They were dead drunk.

After two hours, they were seen lying sprawled on the rock.

“Come on, it’s time for us to depart,” said Apurva.

“Where are the dolphins?” asked one of the boys.

Apurva laughed. “The dolphins are there all right; but we’re going to enjoy a ride by the boat, with all the treasure in it. Don’t you understand?”

The boys understood. They boarded the boat and began rowing it. The dolphins assisted them by pushing the boat. Soon the rock-islet was left far behind them—with the five drunken pirates lying under the open sky, licking dew!

—To continue



THE LIGHTER SIDE

THIEVING A THIEF

Vedanarayanan of Chettipalayam loved to pose as a scholar. The death of his parents when he was young prevented him from continuing his studies. He remained at home poring over the palm leaves and books that his father had collected and spent his time discussing philosophy and religion with his neighbours. Many of them did not have much time to spare for him, as they had work to attend to; many others were not quite interested in those kind of sub-

jects and were more curious to know of their friends' personal problems and liked to intervene in their disputes. So much so, many a day Vedanarayanan would not have any or many to keep him company. However, they respected his knowledge and began to call him Vedanarayanan when he had been named a simple Narayanan by his parents.

Now nearing middle age, Vedanarayanan had become so lazy that he would often prefer to

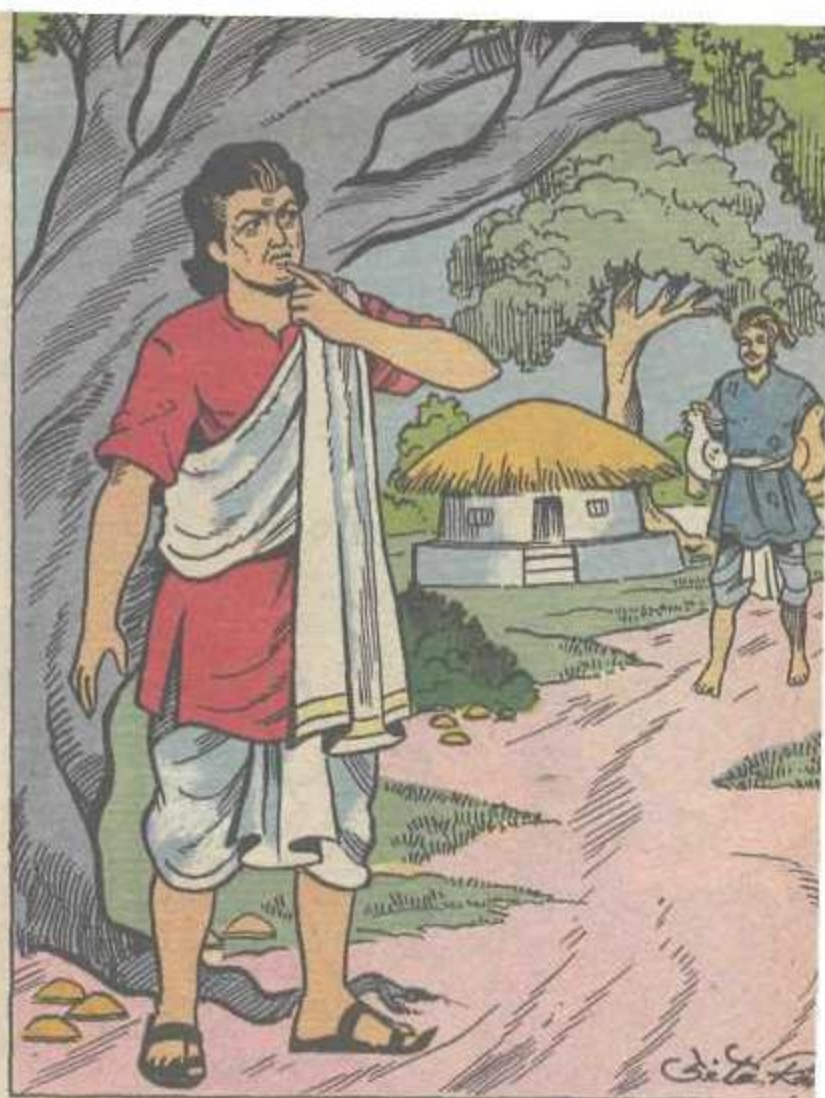
go hungry than find work that would fetch him some earnings. Beg, borrow, or steal appeared to be his favourite motto. But he took care to garb his requests and pleas in such a way that no one would feel he was either begging for food or borrowing money. And whenever he resorted to the third method, he did it so cleverly that he would never be suspected of stealing!

One day, as he was going in search of someone who would, without much protest, part with some money, he met a rustic youth. He appeared a stranger to Chettipalayam. Stranger still because he was holding aloft two fat hens in his hand, apparently to attract a buyer. Vedanarayanan suddenly thought of a plan, to transfer the hens from the youth's hand to his own.

"Hello!" he greeted the youth. "Where are you taking the hens?"

"To the market," the youth, replied and continued walking.

"Wait a moment!" said Vedanarayanan, encouragingly. "You don't have to go as far as the market to sell them. I shall buy them myself. Only, you've to come home with me, so that I can



give you the money. And I shall give you a meal, too."

The youth took one good look at Vedanarayanan, his shabby clothes and haggard looks. Would he have enough money to pay for the hens? A genuine doubt lurked in his mind—about the man he had met on the way. "They're fat hens, and I won't give them away for anything less than fifty rupees," he said in a measured tone.

"Not to worry," Vedanarayanan assured him. "I never asked their price. Such fat hens are not that easy to get. I shall pay you fifty rupees. The meal I give you





will be a bonus.”

After having gained the youth's confidence, Vedanarayanan led him to his house. Not exactly. He took him along a long and circuitous route, so that he could find something more about the youth.

Velan was his name. And he was from the neighbouring town, though he did not look as if he was a townbred. He had tucked up his dhoti, wore a vest torn in several places, and had a coloured check towel tied to his head like a turban. Vedanarayanan found that he was reluctant to talk much about himself and

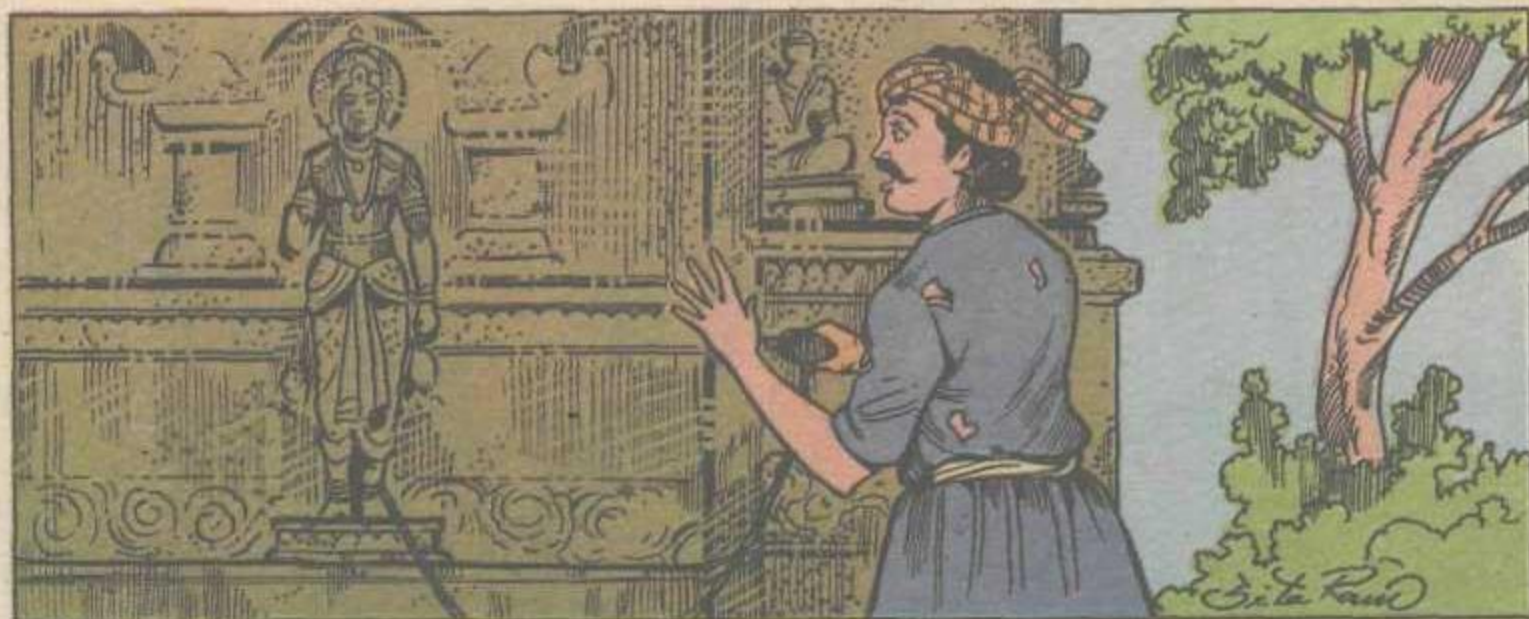
found it difficult to put him at ease whenever he queried impatiently, “How far is your house?” or “Aren't we nearing your house?” or “How much more have we to walk? The sun is really hot!”

Vedanarayanan saw to it that he did not give him any direct replies. “Don't you want to know why I wish to buy your hens?” he asked Velan when he found the youth had fallen into silence.

“To eat them, of course!” said the surprised rustic. He could not think of any other motives the man might have in taking him all that distance to buy the two hens. In fact, he thought, he should have asked him to show him the way to the market where he might have by now struck a deal and gone home.

“No. As a matter of fact, I don't eat chicken,” said Vedanarayanan. “I've a wager—with a friend, who insists that the circumference of our temple is less than a hundred feet; whoever loses the bet has to give the other two fat hens—exactly like the ones you're carrying. In fact, just before we met, I was coming from the market after





buying a long string, and looking for someone who would help me measure it. I'm really fortunate in meeting you. You can help me, and you also have two hens to spare. Here we are, we've almost reached the temple."

By then they had reached a fairly large temple circular in shape. Vedanarayanan stopped near the carving of a god holding a bow and arrow. "You be here, holding on to one end of the string and I shall go around stretching the string till I get back here and tie a knot to mark the exact measurement. Here, give me the hens, so that both your hands will be free to hold the string." Vedanarayanan coolly caught hold of the hens in his left hand and began circumspccting the temple and releasing the string as he walked.

Velan held the string tight as was directed. Five minutes went by, then ten, and then almost fifteen minutes, but there was no sign of the man or his hens. Holding on to one end of the string, he went round and in less than two minutes reached the entrance to the temple where stood the carving of another god. He found that the other end of the string had been tied to the god's leg!

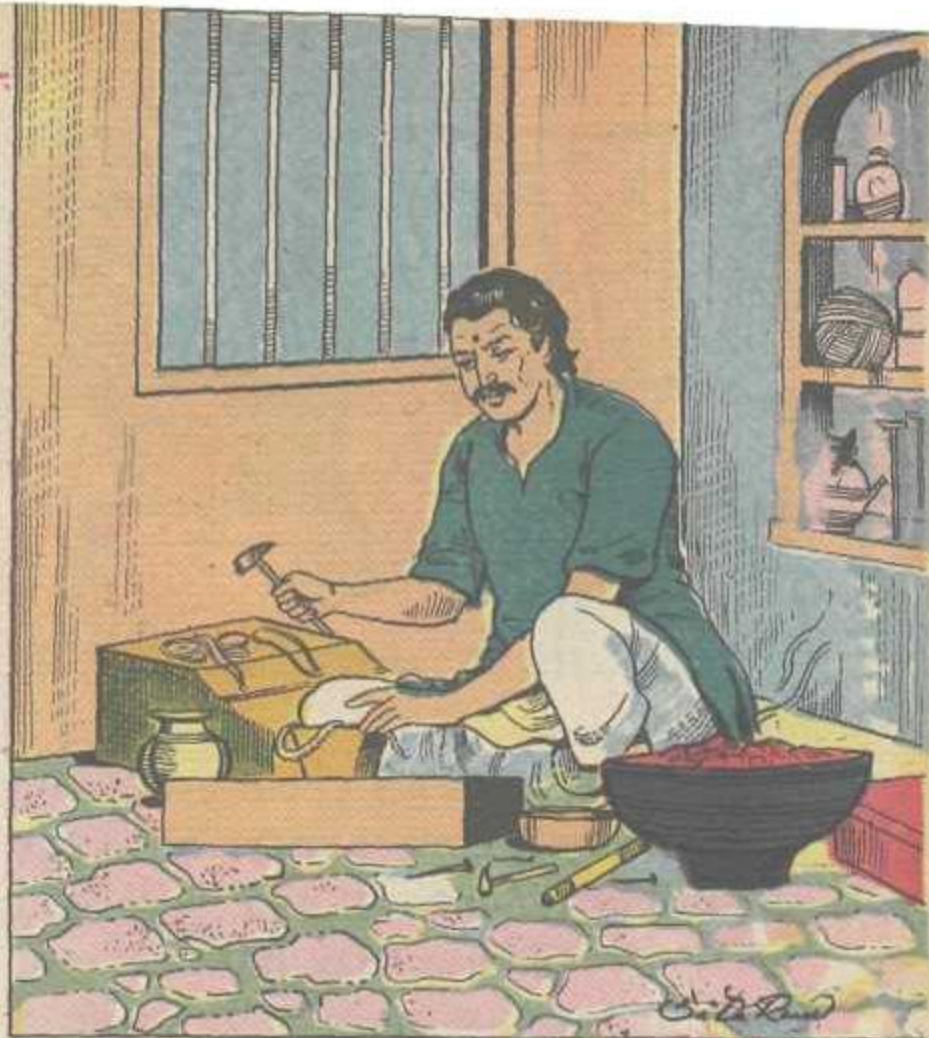
The temple stood at the beginning of a street and Velan guessed his friend might have taken to his heels that way. 'Vedanarayanan, he calls himself!' exclaimed Velan unbelievably. 'And look at that! I stole the hens just this morning, and I never read one stanza in any of the Vedas! From where did he learn how to thief a thief?'

ornament was not worth even five rupees. He felt sorry for Thankappan who, he thought, did not know much about gold. Ponnuswami, however, kept his thoughts to himself and did not utter a word to Thankappan.

After about a month, Pōnnuswami made some brass ornaments, gave them a golden coating, and went to Thankappan. "I've just fixed my daughter's marriage. Everything has to be done in a hurry, and I need a thousand rupees very badly. Here, take these ornaments, they're worth more than five thousand rupees. I would be grateful if you can help me with the amount I've asked for."

Ponnuswami appeared quite excited, and his narration and gestures were all dramatic. He was certain that Thankappan would be carried away by his story. But he was mistaken.

"You've brought me very good news," remarked Thankappan cordially, but very business-like. "Give me those ornaments, let me examine them." He took out the touchstone and scratched one of the ornaments on it. He looked up and said angrily, "Ponnuswami, you're



the official jeweller. How come you can't distinguish fake gold from pure gold? All these ornaments have only a coating of gold; they're not made of real gold. In fact, they're worth not even ten rupees. Nobody can cheat me. Yet you dared to, didn't you?"

Ponnuswami was surprised. How wrong had he been in sizing up Thankappan? He now wanted to find out how much Thankappan really knew about gold. "Please believe me, Thankappan, I was not trying to cheat you. After all, we both are from the same village, aren't we?"





FAKE OR GENUINE?

Thankappan was a pawnbroker, well-known in his town as well as the neighbouring villages. He charged less interest on the money he lent than other pawnbrokers; so all those who were in need of money flocked to him. However, he was quite strict with his customers. He not only insisted on prompt payment of interest and return of the amount borrowed, but ensured that the people to whom he lent money had sufficient means to repay him. Nobody was thus able to cheat him.

One of his regular customers was a poor farmer. Chellappan used to take a gold bangle to Thankappan whenever he

needed money. Just as Thankappan desired, he would promptly repay him, and take back the bangle. He had only this bangle to pawn.

One day, when Chellappan was with Thankappan telling him of his difficulties and the need to raise some money, Ponnuswami, who was the official jeweller of the place, dropped in. He watched Thankappan take the bangle from Chellappan and give him a hundred rupees. After Chellappan went away, Ponnuswami examined the bangle and concluded that it was not made of pure gold, some brass had been mixed, and that the fake



How then can I cheat you? For that matter, everyone says nobody can cheat you. Still, you accepted that fake bangle from Chellappan and gave him a hundred rupees, when you knew well it was a fake not worth even five rupees."

Thankappan could not help laughing. "So, that's why you took that bangle from me and examined it thoroughly? And you came to the conclusion that I know nothing about gold? Let me tell you about Chellappan. He is most honest and trustworthy. I know for certain that he believes the bangle is made of gold, though I know that it is just gold-plated brass. I also know from its pattern that it was made by you. If he were to know that it is a fake, he would have never come to me for help.

Neither would have anybody else lent him money. And he has only just this bangle to pawn. I didn't have the heart to tell him that *he* had been cheated; that's why every time he came to me, I took the bangle and gave him the amount he needed."

Ponnuswami's surprise now knew no bounds. Not only was Thankappan an expert on gold, but he had a heart of gold, full of kindness and consideration for others. He complimented Thankappan, apologised to him, and left the place with the fake ornaments that he wanted to pass off as genuine.

One should not try to assess a person from just one incident or one piece of conversation. A deeper understanding will help one to avoid unnecessary criticism.

CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-36



DEITIES OF INDIA

HANUMAN

Hanuman is a unique deity. He is the one who achieved the status of a god through his sheer devotion to his Lord, Rama.

Hanuman is the embodiment of the power of Lord Shiva. The luminous power was carried by the god of Wind and given to a young hermitess, a great seeker, Anjana. Hanuman was born to her. Hence he is known as Anjaneya.

Hanuman demonstrated that there was nothing which could not be achieved by Divine Grace. He located Sita; he snubbed the mighty demon-king Ravana; he carried a Himalayan hill covered with beneficent herbs for Lakshmana's benefit. He remains immortal for the sole joy of listening to the name of Rama recited by numerous devotees.

Indeed, Hanuman combines in him power with innocence, courage with humility, truthfulness with sincerity. For those who can look at him with devotion, he is a god beautiful.

SPEEDSTER ON TYPEWRITER

The place was Brussels, capital of Belgium. The occasion, the 39th Congress of the International Federation for Shorthand and Typewriting. And the event, "Intersteno 1991" Championship last July, when India's Abhishek Jain of Goraya, in Jalandhar district, Punjab, was declared the Junior Champion (under 20 years).

Thirteen-year-old Abhishek's typing speed of 109.2 words per minute, with an accuracy of 99.93 per cent, was considered better than the performance of the second-placed competitor in the above-20 years category. Abhishek reached a speed of 546 "strokes" per minute, of which some 511 were "accurate".

Abhishek is in the Tenth standard and, therefore, cannot as yet appear for the official Lower Grade typewriting examination in India! Luckily for him, his father runs a commercial institute, where typewriting and shorthand are taught. After school hours, he used to stray into the institute fascinated by the way the students tapped away on the machines. His father did not object

whenever he saw Abhishek fiddling with the keyboard. That was some six or seven years ago. He picked up enough speed to compete at the National-level Championship in 1987, and won a prize. Encouraged by his father and mother, he continued to participate in the contest in later years.

Mustering courage, he sent up his name to Brussels, where he travelled with his father. A well-known typewriter company in India sponsored their visit. Abhishek did not disappoint the firm, nor his parents.

Abhishek has acquired a typing speed of 75 and 80 words per minute in Hindi and Punjabi respectively.

He has already set his sights on the next 'Intersteno' in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1993 and an entry in the Guinness Book of Records. Right now, he has kept aside manual typewriters to practise on electronic machines, for, he has an invitation to an electronic typewriting championship organised by an institution in the U.S.A.

Best of Luck, Abhishek!



DO YOU KNOW?

1. 'When Rome burnt, Nero fiddled' goes the charge against the first century emperor. What was his full name?
2. An Indian who lived in the 6th century B.C. is recognised as the father of plastic surgery. Name him.
3. An Indian invented an instrument to measure the growth of plants. Name the scientist and the instrument.
4. The king was blind at birth. The queen blindfolded herself because her husband was blind. Who were they?
5. Which country has the largest flag flying from a flagstaff?
6. The Olympic flag has five rings on it in different colours. What are the colours? On what basis were they selected?
7. An Indian for the first time appeared on a Soviet stamp in 1956. Who was he?
8. One of the Nobel Prize winners of 1906 had the distinction of eight of his students becoming Nobel laureates in subsequent years. Who was he?
9. Who was the U.S. President, who had the shortest term in office?
10. How deep is the Dead Sea?
11. Who founded 'The Blue Cross Society of India'?
12. Who came to be called 'Deenabandhu' and 'Deshbandhu'?

ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Claudius | Caesar | Drusus | Germanicus. |
| 2. Susruta. | | | |
| 3. Jagdish | Chandra | Bose. | Crescograph. |
| 4. Dhritrashtra and Gandhari—in The | | | Mahabharata. |
| 5. Brazil. The national flag flying in the | | | capital Brasilia is 229'3" wide and |
| | | | 328'1" long. |
| 6. Blue, yellow, green, red, and black. | | | At least one of these colours |
| | | | appears on the flag of any nation in |
| | | | the world. |
| 7. Kalidasa. | | | |
| 8. J.J. Thompson. | | | |
| 9. William Henry Harrison. He made his | | | inaugural speech in 1841 standing |
| | | | in the rain for nearly two hours, |
| | | | caught pneumonia, and died 32 |
| | | | days later. He was a medical doctor! |
| 10. 395.9 metres, making it the lowest | | | point on the earth. |
| 11. Captain V. Sundaram, in Madras, in | | | 1964, to take care of forsaken |
| | | | animals. |
| 12. C.F. Andrews and C.R. Das. | | | |



Earlier than Columbus

Some five hundred years before Christopher Columbus "discovered" America (1492), a Norwegian explorer called Leif Ericsson is believed to have sailed from Greenland and landed somewhere in north America. To commemorate this voyage, a Viking vessel named "Gaia", which is a replica of a 9th century Viking ship, set sail from Norway on May 3, cruising along the course taken by the explorer around A.D.1000. The vessel is expected to reach the U.S.A. by October 12—Columbus Day.

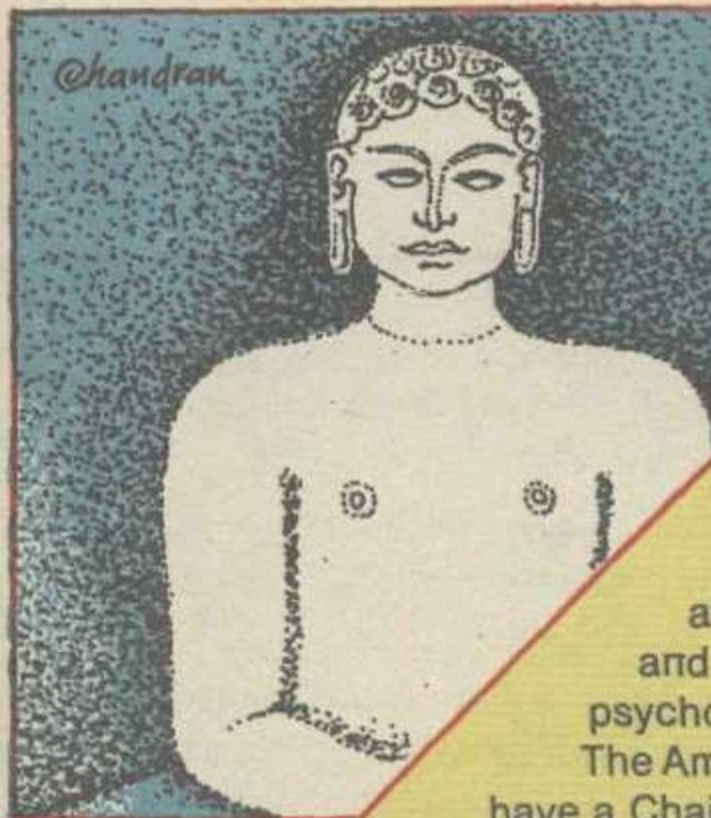


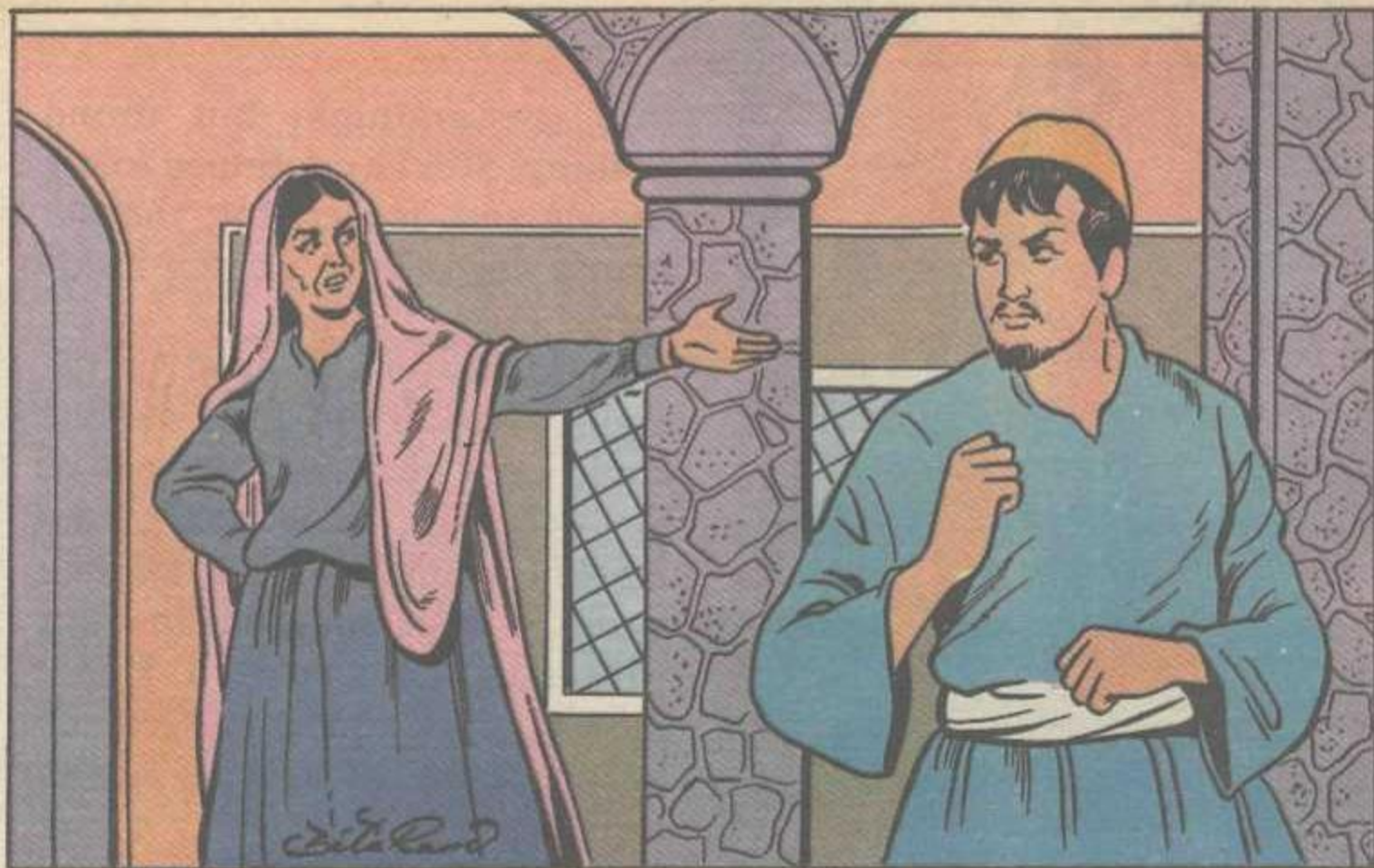
NEWS FLASH

"Ahimsa" University

The Jain community in the U.S.A. is sponsoring the establishment of a university in Blairstown, New Jersey, dedicated to 'ahimsa' or non-violence, which is the bedrock of both Jainism and Buddhism. The "Ahimsa" University will be patterned after the University of Peace in Costa Rica, and will teach culture, history, civilisation, and psychology.

The American University in Washington will soon have a Chair for Tagore studies. The professor to be appointed to the Chair will give lectures on the life, works, and times of Rabindranath Tagore.





TALES FROM MANY LANDS (ARABIA)

THE MISSING STATUE

In far away Arabia, once upon a time there lived a young Nawab. Well, Habib, for that was his name, was a lazy and good-for-nothing man. So much so, after his father's death, he ruled his country with the help of his friends as incapable and inefficient as himself. Very soon, not a single piece of gold or silver remained in the treasury and the affairs of the state went from bad to worse.

Not before long the Nawab was reduced to utter poverty. His

old mother chided him, "It's your foolishness that has brought upon us this curse of misery!"

Habib was very sad. He repented over his foolishness. That night he dreamed a very strange dream in which an old man said, "Nawab, do not despair. Go to Cairo and there you'll find solace."

The influence of the dream on him was so strong that the next morning, disguising himself as a wayfarer, he set out on a journey. For seven long days and nights he





travelled and passed through dangerous terrains. At last he reached the great city. Tired, he sat under a tree to rest and soon fell fast asleep.

Alas, he once again dreamed the strange old man. "Nawab," he said, "this long and arduous journey was only to test you. You've indeed proved yourself brave and determined, and deserve good fortune. Return to your land and deep under your father's chamber you'll find happiness."

On reaching home, the Nawab at once began digging the floor of his father's room. He dug and dug and dug all day long and well

into the midnight but found nothing. Still he continued to dig deeper and deeper, for, the old man's words were ringing in his ears.

Suddenly in the dead of the night, when all was quiet and one could even hear the footsteps of the wee mice, there was a loud metallic sound. The pick-axe had struck a large square trap-door with a big iron ring on it. Habib pulled it open and there stretched before him a long winding staircase.

He hurried down the steps and came to a splendid room. Pure white crystals formed the ceiling. Its walls were studded with sparkling jewels and the floor was covered with mirrors. The moment Habib entered the room, countless little flames flickered from all sides. He then realised that they were only reflections of the lamp he held in his hand. There were large vases of shining marble filled with precious stones. At the far end were ranged seven golden pedestals and on six of them stood statues of beautiful damsels in various poses, each one carved out of a single diamond. They seemed so full of life, almost smiling at their onlooker, that the



Nawab stood motionless staring at them.

On the seventh pedestal there was no statue but a pure white silk on which the following words were written in blue ink: "Dear son, go to Baghdad where lives my former slave, Hussain. He will guide you to find the seventh statue which will bring happiness and prosperity."

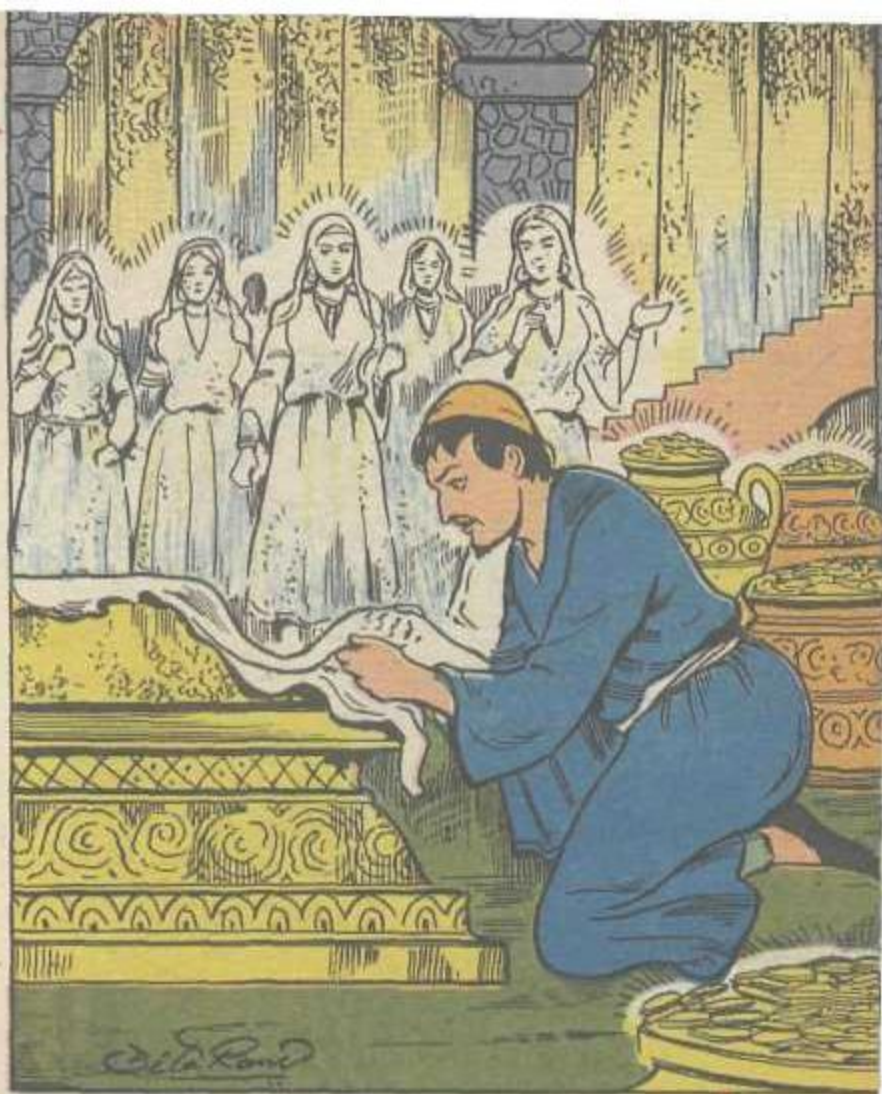
At dawn the next day, Habib set out on his mission. When he reached his destination, he asked a passerby for Hussain's house. He was at once directed to it, for his father's former slave was known throughout the city as the richest and kindest merchant.

When the young man entered Hussain's chamber, in his palatial mansion, he got up from his seat and greeting him politely, asked, "What can I do for you, honoured Sir?"

"I'm Habib, the son of your former master, the Nawab," he replied.

"How do I know that you're really the son of the Nawab? It's now nearly two-and-a-half decades since I left Basra," said Hussain.

Habib, showing him the white silk, replied, "I found this on the seventh pedestal in the secret



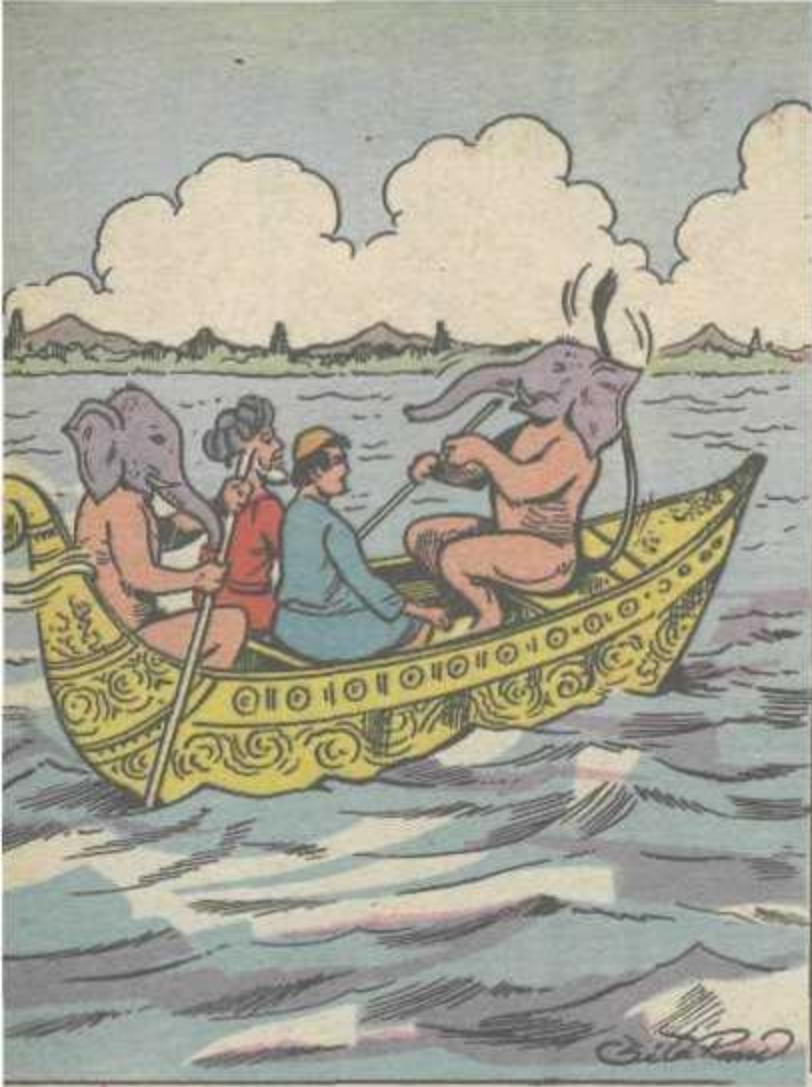
chamber."

"My lord," said Hussain bowing to him, "I was your father's slave and, therefore, I'm yours, too. Tell me how I can serve you."

"Only guide me to find the missing damsel," said the young man.

"The search will be difficult and the journey arduous," replied the merchant, "but I'll surely help you in your mission. Please honour me by being my guest tonight."

Early next morning, Habib and Hussain set out on swift horses. They rode for a month and encountered many adven-



tures on the way. At last they reached the shore of a gushing river.

"My lord," said Hussain, "we're now in the land of the Jinn. Only the Prince of the Jinn has the power to give you what you seek."

They saw, all on a sudden, a golden boat gliding towards them. It was manned by Jinn oarsmen, with the body of a lion and the head of an elephant. They lifted the two men by their trunk and gently placed them in the boat. It glided back on the glistening water and soon touched the shore of a sunny island.

It was an enchanting land. There were flowers of many a hue and colour, gracious green trees, gurgling brooks and birds singing the sweetest songs. Every step they took unravelled new beauties more charming than before. They soon came to a magnificent emerald palace with gates of gold which were guarded by giant Jinn soldiers.

"We should proceed no further, for if we do, the sentries will kill us," cautioned Hussain.

"But how then can we meet the Prince?" asked Habib.

"I shall beckon him with some magical words. If he's angry, he'll appear as a dreadful monster. But if he's in a friendly and helpful mood, we'll see him as a young and handsome man. Whatever form he may take, let's sit motionless on these mats," said the merchant, spreading a mat on the tender grass.

Then, in a clear loud voice, he pronounced some abracadabras and then said, "I implore you, O Prince of the Jinn, appear before us."

There was a rolling sound of thunder and it became dark like the moonless night. Then a light of the seven colours of the rainbow dazzled and there stood



before them a handsome young man. The sun, which had for sometime completely disappeared, again shone brightly and all was quiet.

The charming figure said with a serene smile, "O young Nawab, I know the purpose of your visit. But, in order to get what you seek, you've to fulfil a condition."

"O noble being, I'm prepared to accomplish any task for you," said Habib, rather bravely.

"Then fetch me the most beautiful maiden. Mind you, she should be seventeen summers old, no more no less. And she should be able to answer the following riddle:

"What is happiness?

Is it only wealth,

And fine rosy health,

Good food and nice dress?"

"But how should I know that I've found the right girl and who has given me the correct answer?" asked Habib.

"Take this magic mirror. It'll always remain misty and opaque. But the moment the most beautiful girl stands before you and gives a satisfactory answer to the question, the mirror will reflect her face," said the Prince of the Jinn, handing him a lovely piece



of glass gilded in gold. Then, in a flash of lightning, he disappeared.

The elephant-headed Jinns escorted them back to the other shore. From city to city and hamlet to hamlet Habib and Hussain travelled and met many comely damsels and put to them the Jinn's question. But alas, the mirror remained misty.

One day, as the sun was about to set, they came to a humble dwelling at the edge of the forest. An old woodcutter's family lived in it. They asked for shelter to pass the night and were warmly welcomed. When they entered the small hut, they drew a deep



breath. For, in the fading light they saw before them the most lovely maiden they had ever met.

"She is Ayesha, my only daughter," said the old man. "Please do sit down and she'll get you some bread and warm milk."

Habib lost no time in asking in a friendly tone, "Tell us, Ayesha, What is happiness?

Is it only wealth,
And fine rosy health,
Good food and nice dress?"

The woodcutter's daughter forthwith replied, "Lots of riches, good health, sumptuous dishes and bejewelled garments will indeed make us happy. But alas they cannot give us lasting

happiness."

"Then what is true happiness?" asked Hussain with great curiosity.

"Only when we stop to desire anything and are not attached to the things we possess shall we be truly happy," replied Ayesha with a smile.

Habib took out the mirror from his pocket and looked into it. It was no more hazy and reflected in it he saw the innocent beauty of Ayesha.

In the morning, they introduced themselves and Habib asked the woodcutter for his daughter's hand. The old couple's joy knew no bounds, for, they were proud that their daughter was going to be the wife of a Nawab! But deep in their hearts, they were very sad indeed to part with her.

Bidding farewell, the three of them set out on their journey. "What if I take her to Basra and make her my queen instead of giving her to the Jinn?" asked Habib in a whispering tone.

"If you do so, the anger of the Jinn will not only destroy all of us but also your land and people," cautioned Hussain.

Soon they reached the enchanting island. The moment



the Prince of the Jinn set his eyes on Ayesha, she disappeared into thin air.

"You've indeed successfully accomplished the task and you deserve happiness. Now return home," said the glorious being and he vanished.

At Cairo, Hussain took leave of his guest and Habib headed for Basra, all alone and with a heavy heart. He loved Ayesha. Alas, now he had lost her forever!

On reaching the deserted palace, he hurried down the winding staircase and into the room of treasures. There on the seventh pedestal stood the statue of Ayesha. But like the other figures she, too, was carved out of a single diamond. Nevertheless, with drops of tears trickling down, he gently kissed the lifeless fingers of her hand. The moment

he had done so, lo! and behold, out of the statue walked a living Ayesha, radiantly beautiful. The Nawab looked on in utter amazement.

Suddenly in a dazzle of light, the strange old man whom he had so often seen in his dreams appeared and said, "O young man, I wish you a long and happy life. May God bless you." The vision then disappeared and there was silence. But Habib recognised in the old man the Jinn's voice.

'Indeed,' he thought, 'the Prince of the Jinn is our guardian spirit. All the adventures I went through were only to make me a different man.'

Needless to say, Nawab Habib and Begum Ayesha lived happily for many years.

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das

**LEAVES FROM
THE LIVES OF THE GREAT**

**GOD'S
INSTRUMENT**

Christopher Columbus, who in the 15th century set out in search of "the Indies" but went on to discover what subsequently came to be known as the Americas, was born in Genoa, where the people proudly considered themselves superior to other Italians.

Not for nothing was Christopher baptised thus. The biblical stories mention of a pagan called Christopher who, on hearing about Christ, went in search of Him. A holy hermit told him that if he were to fast and pray, the Lord might appear before him. Christopher confessed that he could neither fast, nor did he know how to pray! The hermit then advised him to help poor travellers to cross the nearby river which remained swollen most of the time.

One night he heard a child cry, "Christopher, come and take me across!" Staff in hand, the huge pagan lifted the infant onto his shoulders and crossed the river. As he waded, he noticed the child's weight increasing and told the little one that he felt he was carrying the whole world on his back! To which the child replied, "You've carried not only the world but Him that created it." For proof, the child told Christopher that his staff would be covered with flowers and fruit. Sure enough, the next day, the staff was seen transformed into a beautiful date palm.

Young Christopher Columbus firmly believed that it was his destiny to carry the word of the Holy Child across the ocean to countries that were "steeped in heathen darkness". Confident of being God's instrument, Columbus faced the hardships of the sea with stoic endurance. He set out on August 3, 1492 and sighted land on October 12. Alighting on the gleaming beach of white coral, he "knelt on the ground with tears of joy and, on rising, gave the place the name San Salvador—meaning Holy Saviour.





VEER HANUMAN

13

(A thorough search of Ravana's palace does not yield any result, and Hanuman feels dejected for some moments. As he wanders in the city, he comes upon a golden castle in the midst of a garden, where he espies a woman sitting alone and weeping silently. He makes a guess, and Ravana's presence there later and his pleadings with the woman to become his wife help Hanuman confirm that he has at last reached the end of his mission. He has found Sita Devi.)

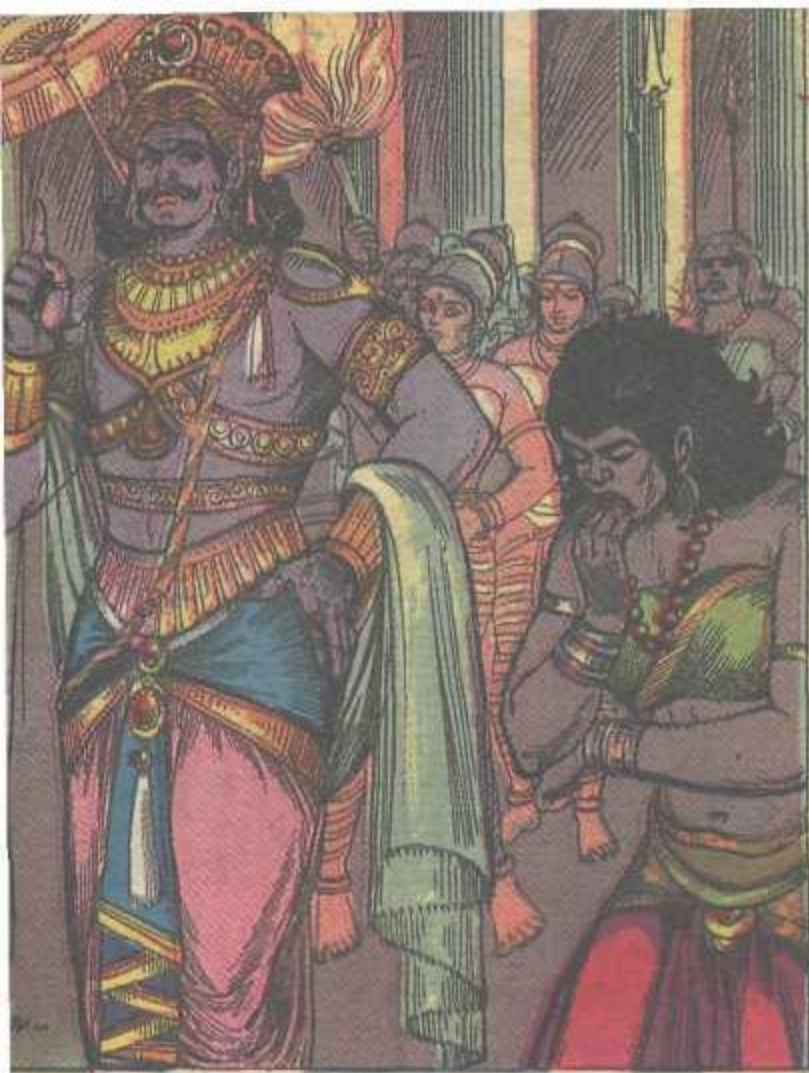
Sita was overcome with revulsion for Ravana and shivered from head to foot. She plucked a blade of grass and held it in her hand. Fixing her gaze on it as if it was Ravana himself, she told him, "You, despicable creature! Do you have any idea who I am? I am the wife of Rama, the eldest son of King Dasaratha of Ayodhya. I am born of royal

parents. I am a virtuous woman, and would not indulge in infidelity; I would not even think of it. If you expect your wife to be faithful to you, then you should wish other women to be equally loyal to their husbands. Perhaps there's none to give you proper advice and guidance, that's why you speak so unwisely and indiscreetly. That indicates an

A PREMONITION

45





impending peril. Your arrogance will bring ruin to your kingdom. I'm not yearning for an easy life in palaces, for wealth and riches, for power and glory. My husband is none else than Sri Rama. If you wish to save yourself, you would be well advised to release me, and to surrender to Sri Rama. Compassionate that he is, he will pardon you. He may even forgive you for kidnapping me. It's time you bid farewell to all your misdeeds and took me back to my husband. If you hesitate to do so, you can be sure of meeting your doom at the hands of Rama and his brother Lakshmana."

On hearing Sita's strong reprimand, Ravana became furious. "Take it from me, O Sita, your impudent advice could be enough excuse to kill you. But I'm refraining from any such extreme action, because my affection for you is genuine. I allowed you so much of time so as to help you take a decision. You've two more months to agree to becoming my wife. If you fail to take that decision, I'll have to kill you. So be warned!"

Ravana turned to the demonesses guarding Sita. "Try your best to make her agree to my desire. Employ whatever methods you like, and don't relax in your efforts."

The youngest among Ravana's wives, called Dhanyamalini, who had accompanied him to the Asoka garden, intercepted him. "Why are you so keen to get a human being like her as your wife? Aren't you happy with me? Don't you know that I'll sacrifice even my life for your sake? Why are you after a woman who does not like you?"

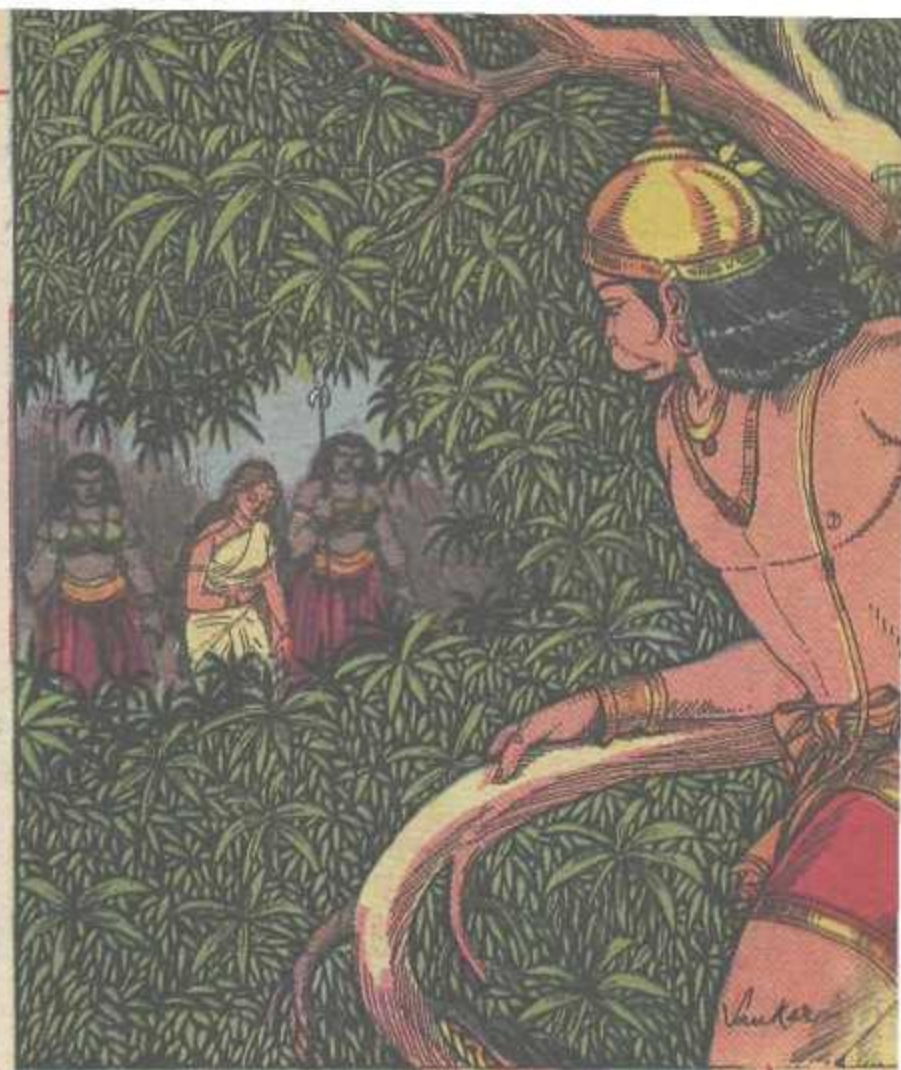
Ravana merely smiled at her and left the place as grandly as he had arrived there. Immediately, demonesses like Ekajata, Hari-

jata, Pradhasa, Vikata, and Durmukhi crowded around Sita and told her how foolish she was in rejecting the love expressed by their king.

Meanwhile, Sita remained calm despite the threats given out by Ravana. She knew very well that she was right then inside the enemy camp. But she felt no fear. In fact, why should she, the devoted wife of Sri Rama, be afraid of anybody? The affection and kindness he showered on her was enough to protect her from any evil, any disaster.

Sita closed her ears with her fingers as the demonesses, one after another, pleaded with her. "Don't you realise that it is a sin to say all these to a devoted, faithful wife?" she admonished them. At that they began threatening her.

Demoness Vikata went near Sita. "Listen, my sister, you're no doubt pure and virtuous. It's all very nice, but even virtue has to have a limit. So far, your Rama has not made any attempt to reach you and take you back. And Ravana, apart from being a king, is quite handsome and strong. All the more reason why you should marry him and be

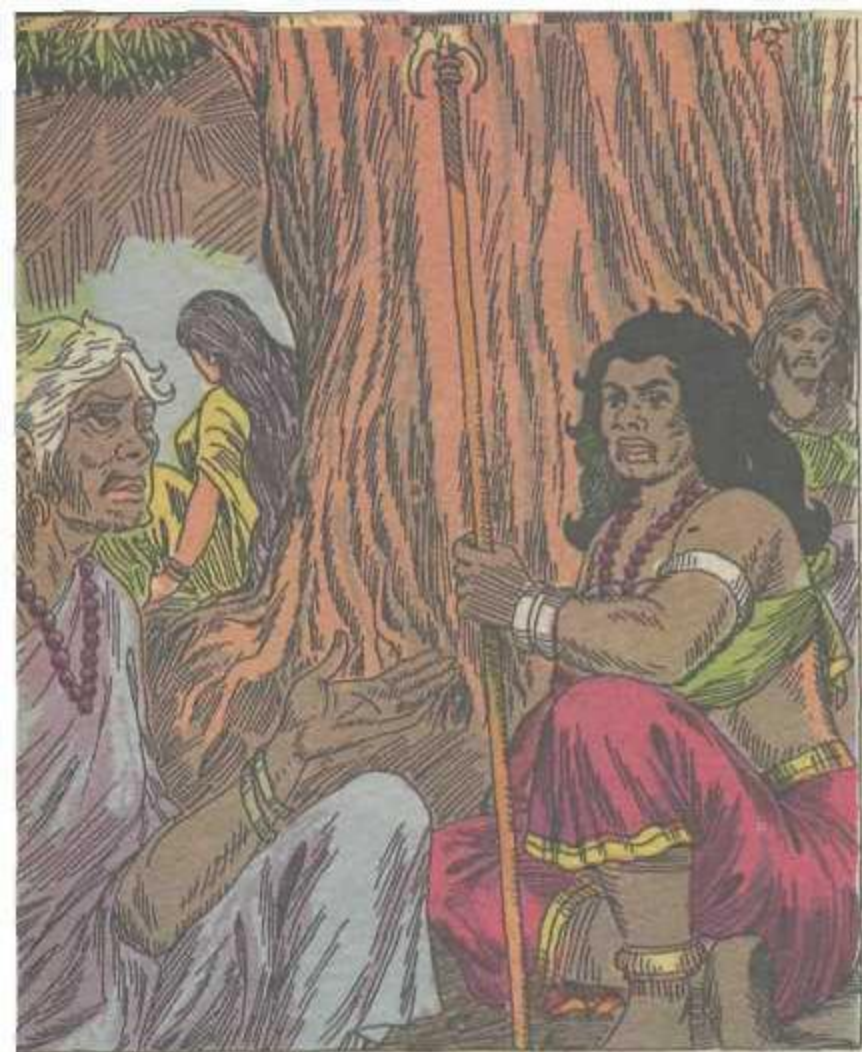


happy. Poor Rama, he is only a wanderer in the forest. How can he win a fight with Ravana? It's time you gave up all such hope."

Other demonesses supported Vikata. "We all mean well for you. You should pay heed to our words. You think your beauty will stay with you for ever? Any one of us can gulp you down our throat in the twinkling of an eye!"

They then began discussing amongst themselves. "Let's kill Sita and report to Ravana. He would allow us to eat her flesh."

Sita was taken aback when she heard this. She remembered all



her dear ones and wept for a long while. She thought it would be better if she died soon than suffering all such torments and humiliations.

One of the demonesses, Trijata, had still some pity left for Sita. She turned to the others and said, "Instead of her flesh, eat mine if you must. I dreamt of the demons fast approaching their doom."

The demonesses were excited and wanted her to describe her dream.

Fixing her eyes on the horizon which was slowly getting lit up by the rising sun, Trijata narrated

her dream: "Ramachandra, clad in white and wearing a garland of white flowers, came flying to Lanka. Lakshmana accompanied him. A thousand swans bore their chariot. Sita, also clad in white, stood on a white hillock that rose from the sea. They met. Then I saw Rama and Lakshmana seated on an elephant, riding through Lanka.

"Sometime later, all three of them got into the *Pushpaka* chariot and flew northward. Ravana was seen falling down from the chariot. Oil dripped from him. He was shorn of his hair and was clad in black. When he fell down, he was dragged away by a number of women. I saw him seated on a donkey and proceeding south. He fell down again, from the donkey. A young woman clad in red, went up to him, put a noose around his neck and dragged him towards south. I saw his brother Kumbhakarna, too, in the same situation. Later, I saw Ravana, his son Meghnad, and Kumbhakarna on a pig, a camel, and a crocodile respectively. Ravana's other brother Vibhishana was, however, wearing a garland of white flowers. He was clad in white adorned with







sandalwood paste. He and his ministers were riding on magnificent elephants. Then I saw the city of Lanka crumbling into the sea."

Trijata was listened to with rapt attention. "Hands off Sita, that's what I would advise you. She is about to be restored to Rama. Show her respect. Be kind to her. Perhaps it'll be wise on our part to protect her from Ravana."

Hanuman was hearing all this from his secret perch on the tree. He wondered whether he should make his appearance before Sita immediately and console her, or

wait for a while more till the demonesses left her alone after daybreak. He wanted to avoid a fight, if he could, with the demonesses, lest the demons were alerted. And if a fight with them ensued, he would certainly succeed, but he would be left tired and would not be able to leap back to where Sri Rama and the others were waiting for him. Sita might even take him to be a demon in disguise!

Clever as he was, Hanuman began reciting Rama's story in a voice loud enough for Sita to hear. "King Dasaratha's noble son is Ramachandra. Respecting his father's wishes, he went to live in the forest with his wife Sita and younger brother Lakshmana. He killed many ferocious demons in the forest. To avenge this, their king, Ravana, kidnapped Sita Devi. Ramachandra befriended Sugriva, the king of Vanaras. At Sugriva's command, a thousand Vanaras set out in all directions in search of Sita Devi. I am one such Vanara and have come here crossing the wide sea. I now believe I've found Sita Devi."

Sita raised her head in amazement, and then saw Hanuman. He looked dazzling like a streak





of lightning. But she was tormented by several thoughts. What she saw, was it real? It was unlikely for anybody in Lanka to speak so highly of Rama. Maybe it was nothing but a dream. And to dream of a Vanara was inauspicious. Did that mean that her lord was in trouble? This thought saddened her very much. But soon, Sita realised that she was wide awake and what she saw could not be a dream. She then thought that as her mind was full of Ramachandra, all that she heard of him might be a play of her mind. She prayed to all her gods to come to her rescue.

Hanuman jumped down from the tree and stood before Sita in obeisance. "Mother! You're noble and pure. Why do you weep? I take you as a goddess. Please tell me whether you're Sita Devi, who was kidnapped by Ravana."

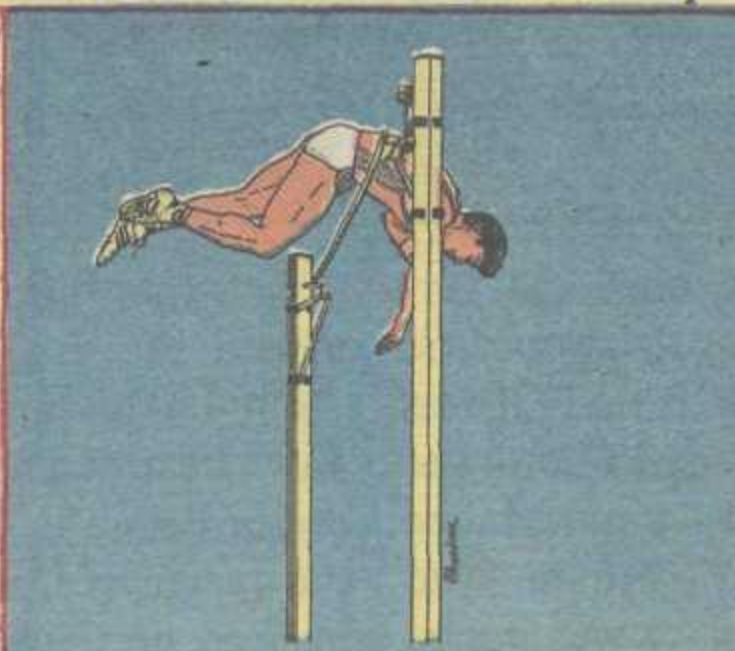
Sita told him softly, "Yes, I'm indeed the daughter of Janaka, daughter-in-law of Dasaratha, and wife of Ramachandra. On the eve of Rama's coronation, one of the queens of Dasaratha, Kaikeyi, insisted on the prince leaving for the forest, and her own son, Bharata, being coronated. As Dasaratha had promised two boons to Kaikeyi earlier, Ramachandra decided to carry out his wishes. So, he started for the forest. Without Ramachandra, even heaven would be an unhappy place for me. So, I followed him. His younger brother, Lakshmana, accompanied us to the forest. It was while camping in Dandakaranya that the wicked Ravana kidnapped me and brought me here, expecting that I would agree to be his wife. If I don't, he has threatened to kill me."

—To be continued



The Soviet Phenomenon

How else can anyone describe pole vaulter Sergei Bubka, who has broken the world record 27 times in seven years? In the first eight months of 1991 alone, he broke his own records eight times! The last one was at Malmo, Sweden, on August 5 when he cleared 6.10 metres, to which he seems to have been "inching"—July 8: Formia, Italy: 6.09m, June 9: Moscow, U.S.S.R.: 6.08m, and May 6: Shizuoka, Japan:



6.07m. All these were achieved at outdoor meets. His indoor meet record stands at 6.12m made on March 23 at Grenoble, France, which shattered his 5-day-old record of 6.11m at his hometown, Donetsk. He broke the outdoor record first in May 1984, and indoor record in July 1985. Bubka believes he can go as high as 6.21 metres. Another 11 centimetres—surely not beyond his reach.

WORLD OF SPORT

A glorious era in Cricket history came to an end when 39-year-old Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards of West Indies, who had hypnotised cricket lovers with his batting prowess for almost 17 years called it a day on August 11, from first class cricket. He was on 60 in the Oval Test

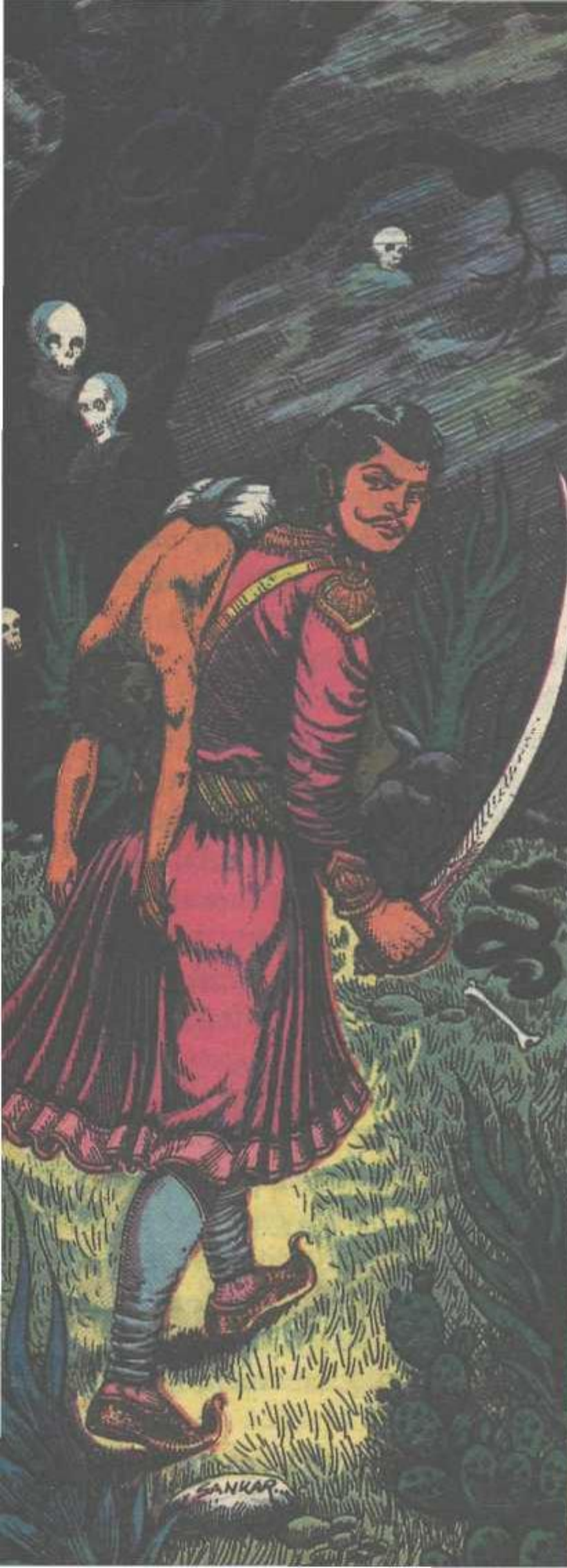
'King' Richards Retires



when he was caught off a delivery from David Lawrence, marking the

end of Richards's 182nd innings. He had 24 centuries in 121 Tests to his credit, with the highest 291 scored against England at the Oval itself in 1976. In totals (8,540) and averages (50.23), he is next only to India's Gavaskar (10,122—51.12)

and Australia's Allan Border (9,257—52.29).



**New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire**

BORROWED CHARITY

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O king, you seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite so as to achieve something. Sure as anything, you'll have to undergo a lot of trials and difficulties before you achieve your objective. But have you ever thought of the futility of charitable deeds? Sometimes, one's charitable action may result in indignity and even threat to one's life. What happened to Nagayya can be cited as a fitting



example. Let me tell you his story." The vampire then started his narration:

Once there was a rich merchant in Malayur village. Muthukumaran was lucky enough to earn a good profit from his business. He was straightforward in his dealings; and so, there was nothing hanky-panky about his earnings. He could not, therefore, be blamed if he spent everything on himself. Why should he spare anything for others? he argued. In short, he was not given to charity.

Some people are like that. Why should one spend on others what one has earned by one's own

effort? Let the others also earn for themselves, they would argue. Muthukumaran was one such person. He felt that if everybody could think that way, everybody would find work and not depend on charity.

Among his servants was Nagayya. Muthukumaran had great faith in him. What surprised Nagayya was that his master had amassed so much of wealth, but would not part with a single paisa. He wished to know from Muthukumaran why he was not giving anything for charity.

One day, as he was massaging his master's legs, he took courage and said, "Sir, would you mind if I ask you something?" Muthukumaran retorted, "If you're sure that I'll get angry, then why ask at all? Otherwise, what'll you think of your master?" When he found that Nagayya still looked eagerly at him, he relented and said, "All right, you may ask."

"O my master, you've plenty of money," said Nagayya, "and you've no children. So, it can't be said you're saving all that money for their sake. Don't you wish to set aside a part of your wealth for charity?"

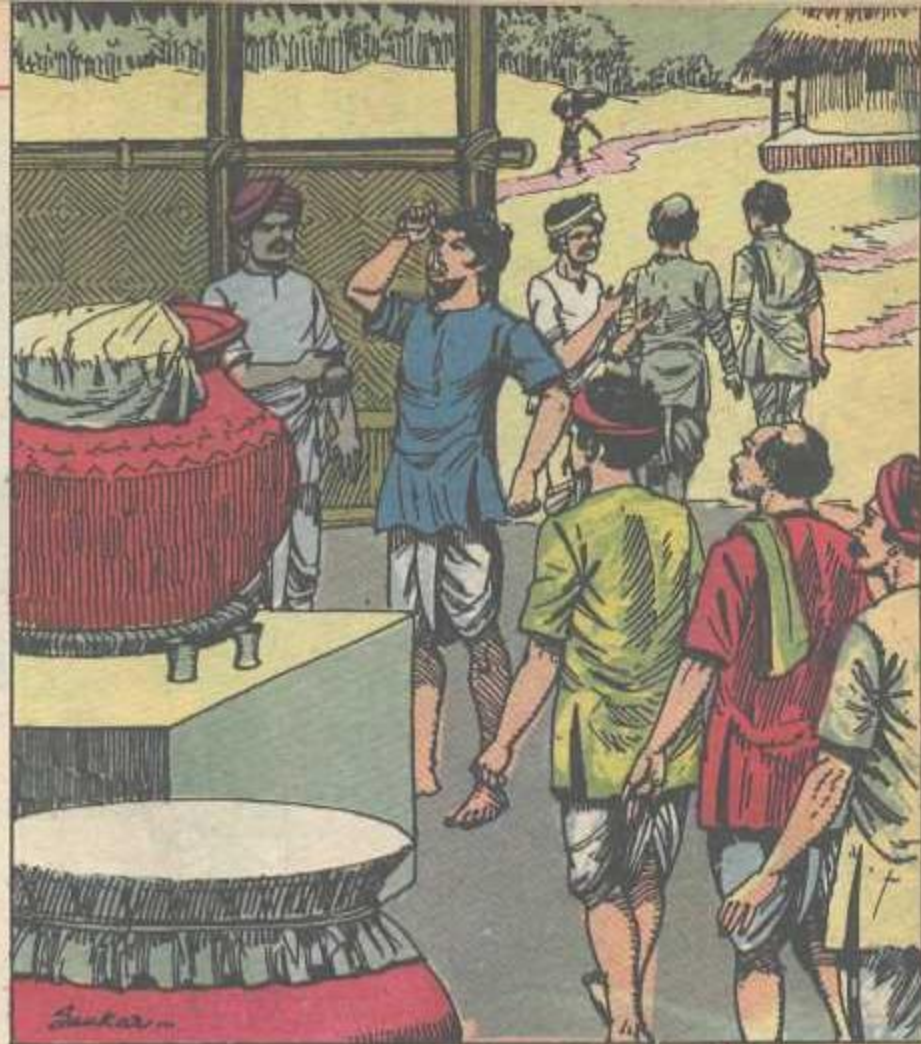
Muthukumaran did not give

him a reply straightaway. He thought for a while, and said, "Nagayya, aren't you asking me this just because you don't have that much money as I have? If you have, would you have put that sort of question to me? Only someone who suffers poverty would want to be a spendthrift, knowing well that he doesn't have any money to spend! Tell me, suppose I give you some money, will you spend it for charitable purposes and not on yourself?" Muthukumaran challenged his servant.

Nagayya did not have any doubt. Unhesitatingly he said, "Sure, I'll spend everything on charity." Muthukumaran was happy, as he trusted his servant very much. "Here, you take this money, and spend it as you wish. There's only one condition. Nobody should come to know that it is my money."

Nagayya nodded in acceptance and took the one hundred rupees that his master gave him. As it was summer time, Nagayya put up a shed with pots filled with water, where the wayfarers could quench their thirst. They were all praise for Nagayya and his act of kindness.

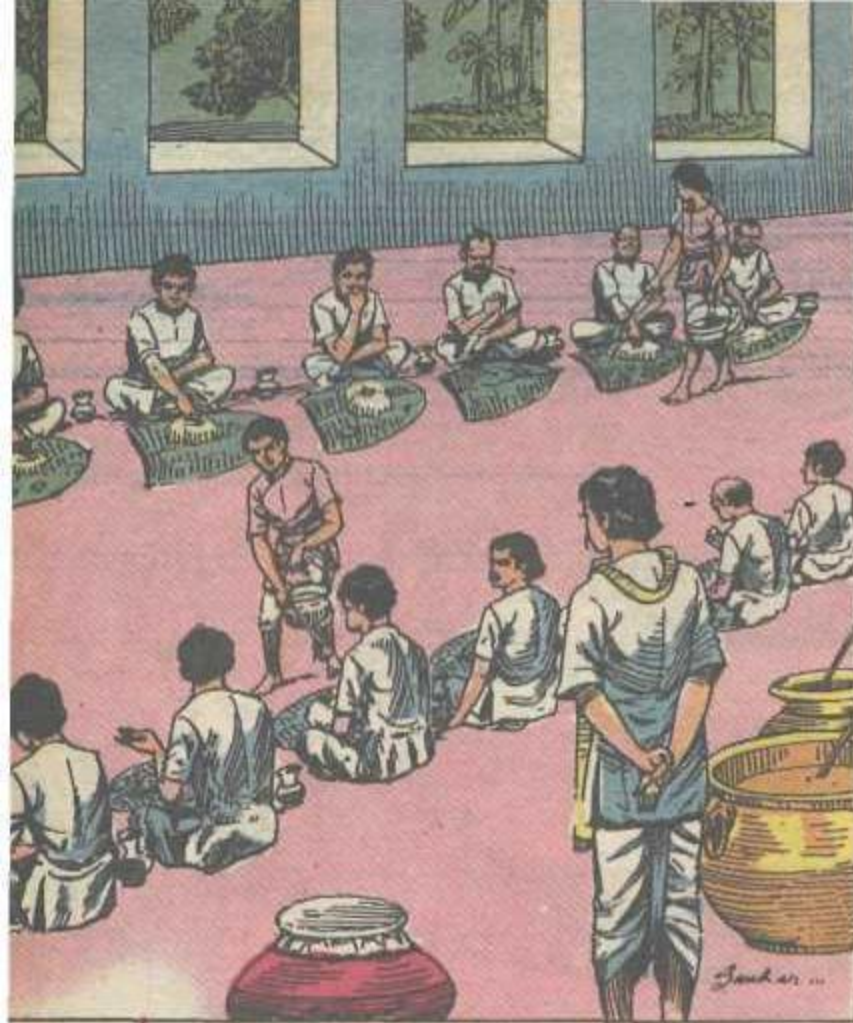
When Muthukumaran found that Nagayya did not use any part



of the money for his own needs but spent everything on storing and distributing drinking water, he was immensely pleased with his servant.

Some days later, Nagayya approached his master again. "Sir, I'm wondering whether I can have some more money, so that I can put up a rest-house where people from other places can stay overnight. They're now finding it difficult as there is no resting place in this village."

"That seems to be a good idea," said Muthukumaran. "I shall give you enough money for a choultry. But see to it that nobody knows



you're spending my money."

Soon the choultry came up. Nagayya Choultry—that was the name given to it—became a popular resort not only for the villagers from elsewhere but some people even from Malayur who went there and enjoyed the comforts of the choultry. Nagayya was showered with praise.

A few days later, he went back to Muthukumaran. "Sir, if only I could offer some food at the choultry, the travellers won't have to go elsewhere in search of a meal."

"That shouldn't be a problem, Nagayya," replied Muthukuma-

ran. "Take some more money and arrange for food at noon as well as night. But do remember my condition." When Nagayya assured him of complete secrecy about the donor, his master was greatly pleased. "As long as I live, I shall continue to give you whatever you need. But remember that when I'm no more, there won't be anybody to help you. What'll you do then?"

"Sir, there's nothing that can't be achieved with effort," remarked Nagayya with confidence. "I'm not bothered with thoughts of what may happen in future. I shall take care of problems as and when they crop up."

As if he had a premonition of his impending departure from this world, Muthukumaran died soon afterwards. Till his demise, he continued to give Nagayya whatever money he wanted, with which he was able to provide food twice a day to the people who came to his rest-house. And there was no end to their praise of him. Unfortunately, after the demise of his master, he had to discontinue everything. First, he suspended serving food; then he was forced to charge a rent from the travellers, who now stopped praising him. In fact, some of them even accused



Nagayya of becoming greedy and miserly. One day, he had an altercation with them and they beat him to death.

The vampire concluded the story and turned to King Vikramaditya: "Tell me, who was responsible for Nagayya's tragic end? The people? Or was it his master, Muthukumaran? Mind you, if you don't give me a satisfactory answer, your head will blow to pieces!"

Vikramaditya did not have to think for long for an answer. "True, Muthukumaran was a wealthy person. As he had already amassed wealth, he was not enamoured of earning any name or fame. That's why he decided to help Nagayya, insisting on himself remaining incognito. On his part, Nagayya was careful in spending the money only for whatever purpose he took the money from

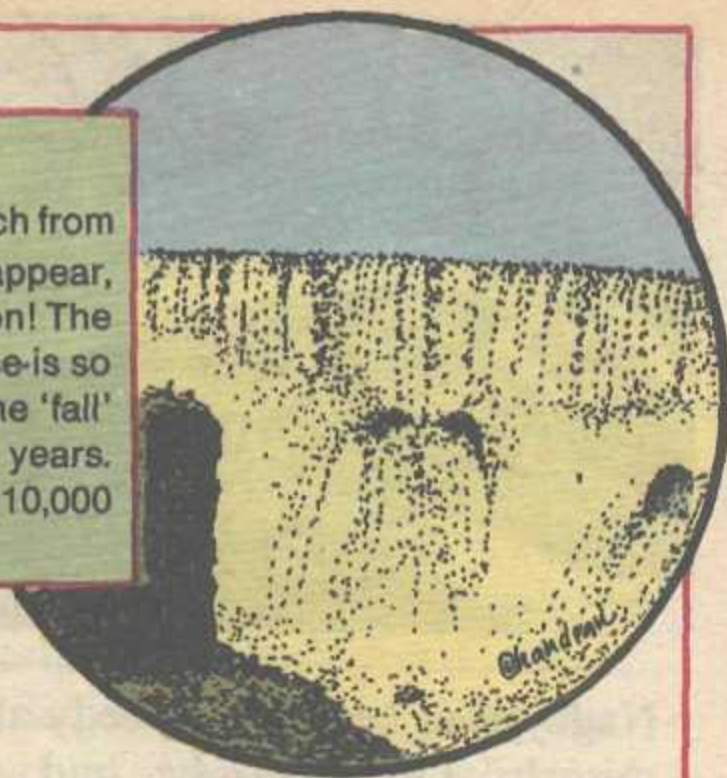
his master. Unfortunately, he was being munificent with someone else's money, and by his generosity he created a set of people who became lazy and thrived on his kindness and mercy. If Nagayya had utilised the money in finding employment for them, they would have been more grateful to him. When the time came, he had to cut down all his generosity, and they turned against him. One must be generous only within one's means. Nagayya overstepped his limits and forgot his limitations. He himself was, therefore, responsible for the tragedy that overtook him, and nobody else."

The vampire realised that he had once again been outwitted by the king. He gave the slip to Vikramaditya and flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him.

WORLD OF NATURE

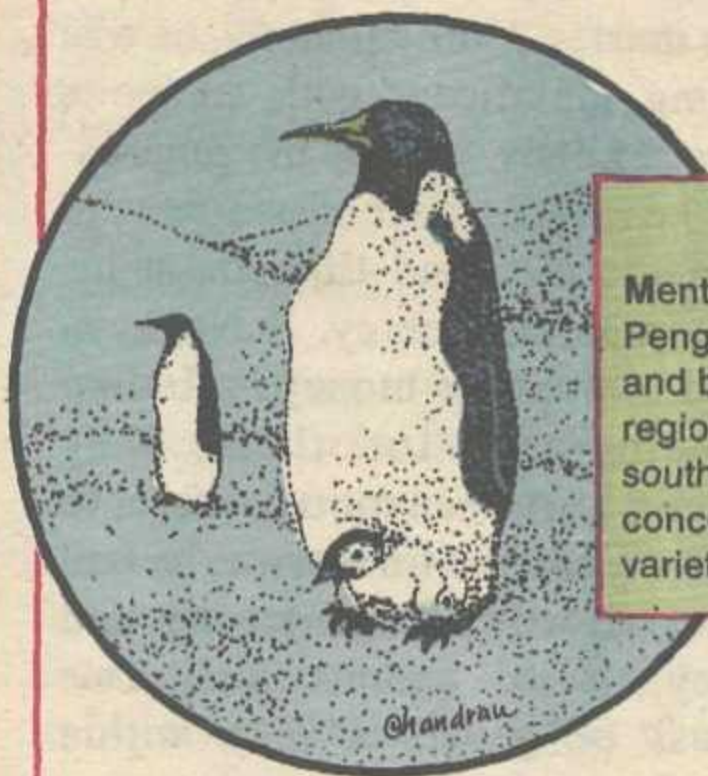
NIAGARA EROSION

The Niagara Waterfalls, which visitors can watch from both the U.S. side and Canada, may disappear, according to geologists—of course, not so soon! The amount of water that falls on the limestone base is so tremendous that it is eroding at a fast pace. The 'fall' may turn into a 'flow' in another 20,000 years. Geologists feel that the Falls were formed some 10,000 years ago.



PENGUINS

Mention Antarctica and one is reminded of the Penguins—birds with a 'tail coat' that walk the length and breadth of the icy continent. Strangely, the Arctic regions in the north have no penguins. The north and south pole are 'poles apart' as far as bird life is concerned! By the way, there are in all seventeen varieties of the penguin!



DRINKING, NO EATING

Spiders eat their victims. True or false? False, because they cannot, and only **drink** them. Their tubelike mouths enable them only to sip liquids. So, they daub their victims with a fluid, which is so strong that they get dissolved. The dissolved tissues are then sucked up. This is how the giant spider, tarantula, is able to ingest a whole mouse or a bird—in about a day.



CULPRIT

One night, there was a theft in the Zamindar's residence. Priceless ornaments were missing. Two days later, his servant Kantan was found trying to sell some of the ornaments in the market. He was caught. Everybody thought that without accomplices, he would not have managed to get into the well-guarded bedroom of the Zamindar.

Kantan was brought to the Zamindar's residence for questioning. He denied that he had any accomplice to help him in his act. The Zamindar's accountant, Thirumala, decided to get at the truth. He asked Kantan, "Then why did *he* tell me that he was with you that night?"

"Who? Who was it that came to you?" asked Kantan, curiously.

"Oh, I just don't remember *his* name!" said Thirumala casually. "Let me see. Was it that sweeper?"

Before Thirumala could complete his sentence, Kantan interjected, "Oh! You mean Veerayya?"

Thirumala quickly reacted, cleverly too, "No, no. I know he's a good friend of yours. Who's the other fellow...? What's his name?" He pretended to have forgotten the name.

Kantan was really caught unawares. "Then, it must be watchman Kannan. He must have tattled. Scoundrel!"

Thirumala did not need any further evidence and ensured that all three of them—Kantan, Kannan, and Veerayya—were promptly marched off to the Magistrate.





MAN TO MAN-EATER

Narayanan was an educated person, but he was given to crazy ideas—like learning the trick to change a human being into a tiger! From the moment the idea got into his head, he began a search for magicians, sorcerers, and pundits who could teach him the secret spell, by reciting which he could do the trick. Unfortunately, whosoever he approached regretted his inability, saying he did not know the incantation to be chanted. Narayanan, of course, would not easily give up and continued his search.

One day, a sage-like person arrived in the town. Narayanan heard of him as someone very learned and knowing several *mantras* with which he had acquired untold prowess. He went and invited the *Sanyasi* to his home, where he was received with extreme reverence. Naraya-

nan worshipped him like a divine person. The *Sanyasi* was highly pleased with Narayanan and said, "Son, you may ask for any gift that you wish for." He blessed Narayanan by placing both his hands on his head.

Narayanan rose on his feet and with folded hands said, "O sage! I wish for only one thing. Please teach me the *mantra* with which I can turn a man into a tiger."

The *Sanyasi* was bewildered. He had come across many people with different wishes. But this was the first time he was meeting a person with such wild ideas. "Son, what you've asked for is full of risks. I do know the incantation, but I've never imparted it to anyone because of the dangers involved. But I'm taken by your reverence and feel that I can trust you. So, it will be my duty to see that your wish is

fulfilled. I shall teach you the *mantra*, but on one condition. You should not use the spell to harm anyone. You may practise it only for your pleasure and entertainment. If you promise me this, I shall teach you the *mantra*."

Narayanan promised that he would abide by the *Sanyasi's* directions. He then chanted two incantations and gave Narayanan a spoonful of red powder and another of yellow powder. "Mind you, you cannot turn anybody and everybody into a tiger. If someone is agreeable to such a change, you may chant the first *mantra* and immediately sprinkle the red powder on his head. He will turn into a tiger and its forehead will have a dark mark. The tiger will be devoid of any human knowledge and will not remember his human existence. The moment you wish him to resume human form, you've to chant the second *mantra* and sprinkle the yellow powder on the head. The man will shed his animal form. I warn you once again. Remember all my instructions!"

After the *Sanyasi* had left the place, Narayanan called his wife



and told her of the *mantras*. Lakshmi got excited. "I wish I could see a tiger, right now and right here!"

Narayanan reminded her: "Ah! There's a drawback. I can't cast the spell on anybody I like. Someone will have to agree to become a tiger! I don't think we can find anyone with such a wish so soon. But there's a way out. I shall teach you the incantations, and submit myself to be experimented with. You can make me a tiger, and after some time turn me again into a human being. Agreed?"

Lakshmi learnt both the incantations by heart, and after chant-



ing the first one, sprinkled the red powder on Narayanan's head. Lo and behold! Narayanan took the form of a tiger. He began growling and ran hither and thither inside their house. Lakshmi knew that it was nobody else than her husband, but she was afraid of the tiger, so she ran and opened the door and let out the tiger. The animal ran away and found shelter in the nearby jungle. Lakshmi waited for sometime for her tiger-husband to come back. But there was no sign of him for days together.

One day, her brother came on a visit, when Lakshmi told him all that had happened. The youth

advised her to accompany him to the jungle where they could search for the tiger. What they did not know was, people had already complained to their king about the man-eater and the havoc it created among them. So, the king too was in the jungle at that time in search of the tiger. He was taking rest under a tree after having roamed the jungle without success. Before he realised what was happening, he heard a growl and a tiger was standing by his side. He knew there was no escape for him, still he managed to push the animal to some distance. By the time he thought of his next step, instead





of the tiger, he was now face to face with a man! There were more surprises. A beautiful-looking woman jumped down from the tree and stood in front of him. The king took her to be a fairy of the forest and bowed to her. "Mother! You came to my rescue at the nick of time. You must be the fairy of the forest."

"O king! I'm not a fairy or a goddess. I'm just an ordinary woman. Lakshmi is my name, and this is my husband. He happened to learn the tiger-*mantra*, and all this was its aftermath." Lakshmi then narrated everything to the king.

Narayanan bowed to the king and said, "If my wife had not come here in search of me and chanted the second *mantra* and sprinkled the yellow powder on my head, I would not have become a man but would have remained a man-eater. I've been

saved, and I've got back my wife."

Lakshmi then confessed. "It was all because of my eagerness to see a tiger that all this happened. I should have been forewarned about the risks!"

The king expressed his gratitude to Lakshmi for saving his life and gave Narayanan a respectable position in his court. On his part, Narayanan never again wished to practise the tiger-spell. One day, he heard that the *Sanyasi* had arrived in their city again. Narayanan and Lakshmi called on him. The *Sanyasi* was curious to know how effective was the spell he taught Narayanan. "Mind you, son, all these *mantras* and incantations must be used for the welfare of mankind. You must get over all your wild ideas and crazy dreams. Spread this message to others." He then blessed Narayanan and Lakshmi.



Which language is spoken by most people in the world?

—Miral Kumar, Manipur

The most common language is Mandarin, spoken by nearly 70 per cent of the Chinese population (roughly 715 million). English comes next.

Which country first used coins?

—Jyotiranjana Biswal, Durgapur

China had what is known as uninscribed 'spade' money as early as 770 B.C. The first 'dated' coin was the Samian silver of Sicily in circulation in 494 B.C.

Which are the planets in the solar system?

—Prasad Shetty, Ghatkopar

Earth, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Neptune, Pluto, Saturn, Uranus, and Venus.

Which is the longest word in the English language?

—G. Satish Kumar, Mahboobnagar

The Oxford English Dictionary has this 29 letter word: floccipaucinihilipilification. Author Mark McShane used praetertranssubstantiationistically (37) in his novel *Untimely Ripped*. There is a disease spelt with 45 letters, besides a medical term of 39 letters, though the longest words in common use are disproportionableness and incomprehensibilities (both 21 letters).

Correction : Edwin Arnold wrote "The Light of Asia", and not Mathew Arnold, as stated in the September issue.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



S. B. Takalkar



Manjula

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for August '91 goes to:

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The Winning Entry: "JOY OF PLAYING" "JOY OF WATCHING"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

He who commits injustice is ever made more wretched than he suffers it.

—Plato

As is a tale, so is life: not how long it is, but how good it is, is what matters.

—Seneca

The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion.

—Thomas Paine

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